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CONTENTS

COMMENTS	Page 269	PARAEMIOLOGICAL. By Y. Y.	278
FREEDOM FROM WANT	271	BOMB IN THE PARLOUR. By Amabel Williams-Ellis	279
AMERICA TALKS TO JAPAN. By Frederick Kuh	272	THE MOVIES. By William Whitebait	279
HITLER'S EUROPE	273	CORRESPONDENCE	280
A LONDON DIARY. By Critic	274	From Arnold Kettle; Sir John Maynard; C. A. Smith; R. Waddell; C. W. Balchin; Eva M. Hubback; B. H.; T. C. Worsley; Kate Rackham.	
THIS ENGLAND	275	BOOKS IN GENERAL. By V. S. Pritchett	282
GIVE US THE TOOLS. By Sagittarius	275		
ADVANCED LANDING GROUND	276		
AMERICAN SUMMER. By H. N. Brailsford	277		
THE SILVER SWAN. By Robert Gathorne-Hardy	278		

REVIEWS:	Page
On Writing in the Country. By C. E. M. Joad	283
New Novels. By Anthony West	284
An English Concentration Camp. By J. R. Ackerley	286
Cine-Biology. By G. W. Stonier	288
Publicity in Wartime. By Copywriter	288
Being Definite. By Stephen Spender	290
SHORTER NOTICE	292
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS	294
THE WEEK IN THE CITY. By Urbanus	295

COMPLACENCY AND REALITY

DESPERATELY besieged, Leningrad sends a generous greeting to London; Russia, resisting the most terrific invasion in history, thanks us for our aid. What aid? Several squadrons of the R.A.F. to the U.S.S.R.; German fighters kept in the West to deal with British bombers; some supplies and more to come (half from Britain and half from America), with a special mission to Moscow, already much delayed, headed by Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Harriman. A common front has been created in the Caucasian area. Nothing on the Western Front, official opinion seems to hold, is possible. What does "possible" mean? Apparently the British staff regards the risks as too great to run; equipment and especially shipping is short; the Government fears another Dunkirk or Crete; at most a British diversion can be no more than a large scale raid of no very substantial assistance to Russia. No section of the British press regards these answers as adequate; the *Times* has now joined in the demand for reconsideration of the British policy of inaction. Only the experts can judge the technicalities, but everyone doubts whether the experts are fully alive to the extreme urgency of the situation. Have those who give advice in these matters ever realised that Leningrad and Moscow and the Ukraine are just as much parts of the British front as the Belgian frontier once was or the cliffs of Dover may be some day; that the shipping and equipment will always be short if we take the advice of experts; that if, on the other hand, a Western diversion were part of British policy adequate equipment and shipping would in fact be found, because the country would in that case be informed that it had to do without much that now occupies our ships, much of which, in a case of real urgency, can be regarded as unnecessary? As for the risks, they seem less than the risks of inaction? If Russia is reduced to a purely defensive role in the East and a large part of Germany's force brought over to the West, what chance remains of a military victory? To launch his gigantic offensive Hitler withdrew a large part of his army in the West; the front from Narvik to the Mediterranean is but thinly held with second-class troops. Diversion would seem possible in Norway, where the Nazis are troubled by widespread popular opposition, or in the Iberian Peninsula, where German tourists are far more prolific than they were in Iran, or even in France, where sabotage and assassinations are met by mass executions and imprisonment. We add that the effects on the troops of even partially successful action might be better than the process known as "browning off." If it is indeed true that our general staff is not in a position to take advantage of this opportunity, are they likely to be better prepared or to be in as good a position in the spring or at any other time? The implications would seem to be that we are permanently committed to a purely defensive war with no plan except to resist invasion. If, indeed, Hitler succeeds in so ending Russia's power to take the offensive, then even an American decision to send an army to Europe (of which there is at present no prospect) would not seem to give much hope of a military decision.

The complacency about the situation shown by many people in the country, and especially in official positions, is staggering. Mr. Roosevelt encouraged us by ordering his ships to shoot at German submarines, which was certainly an aid in winning the Battle of the Atlantic and which should release some units of the British Navy. The public is pleased to hear that the Foreign Office absurdities in Iran are cleared up and that the Shah has been forced to abdicate It is told to rejoice that so many Germans are being killed in Russia, that the *Luftwaffe* has been weakened and far more tanks destroyed than we have ever possessed. We doubt whether it has yet appreciated the implications of recent remarks made by Mr. Biggers, who speaks with unique authority about Anglo-American production. Mr. Bevin spoke last autumn of British and American production as being likely to exceed that of the Axis in six months. To-day Mr. Biggers tells us that we may surpass the Axis in 1943. Yet a large part of the public, after a spell of immunity in the air, seems surprisingly complacent. Never were two words less happily harnessed together than "alarm and despondency." Uneasy waiting leads to despondency among the informed and complacency among the unintelligent; alarm is salutary and leads to action.

We have often been asked why Germany attacked the U.S.S.R. We have never seen any mystery about it. Mr. Churchill told us when he said that Hitler's policy was to defeat his enemies "one by one."

If he had attacked Great Britain this summer he ran the risk of finding himself at war with the United States and of Stalin attacking him from behind. If he attacked the U.S.S.R. he knew it was difficult for a sea power such as Britain to do more than annoy him from the West. His General Staff believed that Russia could be defeated; in that case the revolt of gallant men throughout France and Scandinavia, Poland and the Baltic, could be completely crushed and the only dynamic which Hitler had to fear on the Continent would once again be driven beneath ground. Hitler would then be in a position to dictate, perhaps from Moscow itself, his New Order in Europe, and to know that Quisling governments would obediently drag their tarnished flags behind the triumphant swastika. Russian resistance has certainly been more powerful than the German Staff expected; it has taken a more ghastly toll of the German army and air force than Dr. Goebbels will be inclined to admit. Winter in Russia will be bad for German morale. So much is to the good. Russia can maintain her resistance with depleted resources. Even so, we doubt whether Hitler regrets his Eastern campaign. He need not hurry to attack Britain. The psychological effects of the onslaught on Russia have no doubt been what Hitler anticipated; a summer's immunity has been worth a victory to Hitler in terms of British complacency, and in the United States the effect of the Russian campaign has been a marked tendency to withdraw further from the war on the ground that the Allies had now all the man-power necessary to hold the Nazis. Behind that specious argument we hear the voice of Lindbergh, now engaged in propaganda which is not only isolationist but actively pro-Nazi, and designed ultimately to produce an American Fascism. Hitler may calculate that the British Army, like the French Army in the winter of 1939, will find nothing so demoralising as inaction, and that by next summer the same forces that disrupted France in 1940 will be actively at work in this country.

These calculations can still be falsified. The first necessity is to hasten aid of every description to the Russians who are now fighting the Battle of Britain as well as the Battle of Russia. Then the common people and the workers in this country must be taken far more into the Government's confidence; they must be convinced by the appointment of Ministers and officials who understand that this must be a People's War. Complacency, unpreparedness and insular failure to see this war in its true perspective as a world revolt against poverty and tyranny have been from the outset our vices in this war. There is still time to save ourselves by our exertions.

The Eastern Front (*from a Military Correspondent*)

When the fragmentary pieces of news regarding operations on the Eastern front are pierced together it becomes clear that the Germans have launched three fresh major offensives, of which one at least has met with considerable success. In the South, having forced a passage across the lower reaches of the Dnieper, they are reported to be striking south-east with a view to cutting communications between the Crimea and the mainland. In the Kiev sector, the southern arm of a pincer attack, crossing the Dnieper at Kremenchug, has advanced swiftly northwards with the Kiev-Poltava-Kharkov railway as its objective, while the Russian evacuation of Chernigov would seem to imply that a German army striking south-east from Gomel has carried the line of the River Desna and may succeed in effecting a junction with the Kremenchug column, thus enveloping the defenders of Kiev. Finally, in the North, while pressure on Leningrad is unrelaxed, German claims to "success" south of Lake Ilmen suggest that an offensive has been started against the left flank of the forces held by Marshal Voroshilov outside Leningrad and astride the main Leningrad-Moscow railway. The situation thus revealed is undeniably serious: it suggests that in the Ukraine the Russians may have to fall back to their next defensive line, the River Don, while the German attack south of Lake Ilmen may be intended to menace the hinge (the Valdai Hills position) on which the Russian front would pivot west of Moscow. Pressure on Bulgaria and Turkey also suggests that Hitler is seeking an alternative route in the south. Russian resistance, however, both in field operations and in the beleaguered garrisons of Leningrad and Odessa, remains steadfast; and though the loss of the Eastern Ukraine would be a blow, the U.S.S.R. is well supplied with munition plants east of the Don. Provided her armies in the field can retire without disintegration, victory will still elude Germany's grasp.

Home Front (*By an Industrial Correspondent*).

As soon as American materials supplied to this country under the "Lease and Lend" system began to pass into the general flow of British production, the Isolationists in the United States were equipped with an additional argument—to the effect that British capitalists were misusing American generosity to cut American exporters out of their markets in Latin America, and even to compete with United States producers in their own home market. There was never much real substance behind this argument; for American materials bulked small in the manufactured goods sent out from Great Britain. But there was just enough in it for a plausible case to be made; and accordingly the British Government had to provide the President with a watertight answer to his Isolationist critics. This has now been done, to the fullest possible extent; and the Isolationists will now have to look for a fresh argument, which they will doubtless succeed in finding. Meanwhile, the export drive goes on, practically unaffected. Firms in the trades which are not mainly on war work are having their supplies of materials, and the amount of labour they are allowed to retain, regulated according to the proportion of their output they are able to sell abroad; and, when "concentration" is taking place, the firm which wants to make sure of survival goes after exports at all costs, as the only safe means of being recognised as a "nucleus" firm. This, of course, aggravates the shortage of consumers' supplies in this country; and there are a great many lines of which reserve stocks cannot be expected to hold out much longer. It is increasingly plain that the Government means to rely more on shortages of supplies than on any other weapon as a means of preventing inflationary spending; and, up to a point, this weapon is likely to prove itself effective.

* * *

It has, however, some rather odd results. If people have nothing much to spend their money on, and are doing fairly well as a result of the war, they will spend it on food where they can. The effect is seen in crowded middle-class restaurants, and in a certain disregard of *menu* prices. Of course, one powerful factor in driving the better-off classes to the restaurants (and the better-off men workers to canteens) is that by this method they largely avoid the effects of rationing. But the other factor counts, too, as anyone who keeps his eyes open in London at the lunch-hour can see easily enough for himself. The consequence is hardship for those sections of the population which have no canteens to go to, and cannot easily feed in restaurants. It used to be given as an excuse for leaving restaurants out of the coupon system that the total amount of food consumed in them was a negligible fraction of total consumption. But it is difficult to believe that this is still true. The class-discrimination involved has, no doubt, become less since the widespread development of canteens at factories and, in a smaller scale, the growth of communal restaurants. But the conditions are still unfair to miners and agricultural workers (despite their extra cheese) and to those who have to take their meals almost entirely at home. Lord Woolton said the other day that, despite the blockade, we are the best-fed nation in Europe; and I daresay he is right. But there is still a good deal wrong with our methods of food distribution, and the apparent "equality of sacrifice" involved in the rationing system is not really so equal when one looks into it closely. The people I am sorriest for are, first, the remaining workers in non-essential trades, who have mostly neither canteens nor wages which allow them to go to restaurants, and the housewives who have to live on their rations while the employed members of the family can get extra food at restaurants or canteens. Among these latter are a great number of the wives and dependents of men serving with the forces—incidentally, a very good reason for not confining improved treatment of this section of the population to the families of officers.

* * *

The Trades Union Congress again shelved the question of family allowances—by referring it to the General Council for full report. As the General Council had already shelved the question in reply to an approach from the Labour Party, this does not carry matters any further. Indeed, Trade Union hostility to family allowances has probably grown stronger of late as a result of the Government's White Paper on wage stabilisation. A good many Trade Unionists are inclined to regard the advocacy of family allowances as inspired by the desire to avoid wage increases—as it sometimes is. The arguments for stabilisation of wage-rates would obviously be strengthened if family allowances were granted and made to vary with changes in the cost of living. But, though this is true, it does not dispose of the case in favour of the allowance system. The only really respectable argument against family allowances is that, with only limited resources available, it is preferable to grant the principle by improving social services in kind, as against doling out money which may be misused for quite different purposes. This argument, however, loses all its force unless the allowances in kind are in fact given. If a universal system of school meals, in holiday as well as in term, were introduced, and if "milk in schools" were made universal throughout the year,

the opponents of cash allowances would have a case. They have none at present; for the fears of the Trade Unions that the system might be used against them in wage-bargaining cannot be accepted as a good reason for letting the children go short.

Merchant Seamen

Two admirals, Lord Cork and Lord Chatfield, and a master mariner, Lord Marchwood, asked in the Lords last week for a commission of inquiry into the conditions of service in the Mercantile Marine. The Government's refusal was based upon the existence of the National Maritime Board, which includes representatives of shipowners', officers' and men's organisations. Since then the columns of the *Times* have added points on both sides. The Maritime Board has written objecting to a commission, on the grounds that it was itself well able to regulate conditions, which, it avers, are better than those in the Navy; that continuity of employment is guaranteed to seamen in wartime; that the sailor does not want to wear a uniform, such as Lord Chatfield suggested; and that merchant seamen will not tolerate being made an appendage of the Royal Navy. This last, together with the natural resentment of poaching by an established body, is probably the root of the matter. Merchant seamen do not enjoy conscription in any form. Not merely do they hold themselves the equals of navy men, they think themselves much better sailors. Anyone who has ever heard the Navy discussed on the bridge or the deck of a merchant vessel knows that; and it is true that in peacetime their seafaring is more continuous and varied, and in wartime it is fully as dangerous. There are, however, many officers and men who do not agree that conditions at sea are satisfactory. Most would concur with Mr. Lawrence Holt, who writes asking for government help in improved training. There is also the Manchester School of shipowners, who with Major Cripps of the Elder Dempster Line argue that free competition is the spur of ability and the sanction against laziness. Free competition in the past has meant total insecurity and often scandalous conditions for sailors; it still, in some cases, means ships that are floating slums. It means free competition between shipping lines, with fluctuations more acute than in any other trade, and slumps such as that of the early 'thirties when Essex river-mouths and Highland sea-lochs were crammed with hundreds of idle ships rotting at sea till they were bought up for scrap, and the ports were full of thousands of idle and impoverished sailors eating their hearts out, who noted grimly vast fortunes left by their intermittent employers. Have any group of employers so little deserved that we should listen when they talk of free competition?

India in the House (*By a Parliamentary Correspondent*).

After sitting on three days the House again adjourned. Members of both the Labour and the Liberal Parties have made it clear to their leaders that they will not tolerate a further recess after another short sitting.

The Moore-Brabazon incident was shockingly mishandled. Shinwell suggested that Moore-Brabazon should make a personal explanation from the Box. If this suggestion had been accepted, the House, which is always generous in such personal matters, would have forgiven him. Instead the Prime Minister berated his critics and accused Gallacher of changing his opinions when ordered to do so by a body outside this House. Gallacher unfortunately lost his temper and referred to the Prime Minister in terms which he felt compelled to withdraw later in the Session.

Left Wing Members were disturbed by the references to India made by the Prime Minister in his statement on the war situation. He seemed to indicate that whilst the Atlantic Charter might apply to Syria during the war, there was little chance for India. This disquiet found expression during the short debate on the India and Burma (Postponement of Elections) Bill. Ammon, speaking from the Front Bench for the Labour Party, whilst regretting the situation in India, accepted the necessity for the Bill. The new "ginger group" of Labour back benchers, led by Silverman, in a forcible speech which was worthy of a fuller House, attacked the measure both and nail. He maintained there was no similarity between the extension of the life of the present House of Commons and what we were proposing to do in India.

> "It was," he said, "this House that decided to prolong its own life . . . That is not the case here. If the Legislative Assemblies in India had been asked to prolong their own mandate, there would have been a parallel to what took place in this House. This Bill is not the act of a democratically elected Legislative Assembly prolonging its own existence and knowing it will have to answer for that fact to the peoples who elected it. It is an act of direct and personal rule, an act of autocracy, an act of dictatorship."

In this attack he was strongly supported by Sorensen, S. O. Davies and Cave. On the Committee stage Silverman drew attention to a curious fact. "I understand that when a member of these Legislative Assemblies is in prison in India under a Defence Regulation, or under some political charge, the Government then proceed to do what the Government hesitate to do in the case of the hon. and gallant Member for Peebles (Capt. Ramsay). They declare the seat vacant."

FREEDOM FROM WANT

In the horror and crisis of war there is special significance in the gathering of international scientists at next week's meeting of the British Association in London. These scientists cannot sort out the vast tangle of our political and moral demoralisation. They can make clear with a new emphasis and precision the folly of mankind, its chance of happiness and its risk of destruction. Our skill, they say, is at your disposal. Take your choice. Mr. Churchill warned you of "a new Dark Ages made more horrible by the baleful light of a perverted science." We tell you that the alternative, if you use instead of perverting our aid, is a world of prosperity unimagined by the fancy of poets and prophets.

For the first time the human animal could be free from want. All our economics and social science have been based on the axiom of scarcity. Yet to-day we know how to grow enough food to keep the whole population of the habitable globe in comfort. Medicine has advanced to the point in which there are few diseases which cannot be prevented or cured. We have the technical knowledge which would enable us to find substitutes, sometimes better than the real thing, for many of the basic materials about which men have quarrelled and fought during the centuries. We may live to see the day of plastic ships and houses; we may dress in gorgeous clothes made without wool, cotton or silk. Our problem is no longer the niggardliness of nature, but our failure to use her generosity for our own happiness.

Why do we fail? Because of out-of-date political systems, false economic theories and social organisations which have sprung from a property system which everyone knows to be absurd. Capitalism, as we have known it, was a highly efficient method of increasing production. To-day there is no one with any pretence to intellectual authority who can make a case for the retention in private hands of the basic resources on which our common social life depends. The strains and stresses that have arisen out of the glaring failure to adjust our political and economic system to the known possibilities of general well-being are at the root of our national animosities and our social wars. We are confronted by a hideous tangle of national and class struggles, by the hatreds and fears bred of past wrongs and past wars, and by the greed and will to power of ruthless men who see in the confusion of the world the chance of their own domination.

There is not perhaps much except common fear of the Axis to unite Mr. Churchill, President Roosevelt, Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek. But they have this in common. In the democratic countries the right of everyone to economic well-being as well as political freedom is accepted philosophy, even though it is often denied in social practice. In Russia the change from feudalism to Socialism is at least in theory the foundation for a future era of political freedom as well as economic plenty. In China the democratic conceptions of freedom and equality have grown fast during the war amongst those who had inherited an immemorial peasant culture. In every country men and women demand food, peace, and security. Hitler replies by rhetoric about the greatness of the Third Reich, about the splendour of death in the service of the Führer and the coming conquest of the world by Germany. In the Atlantic Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill meet to promise, in the midst of war, a world "free from want and fear." Perhaps they have no clear conception of the change that is involved in such a promise. They may not have realised how far along the Socialist road their words, if sincere, would take them. But as sane men they are not so out of touch with common men as not to understand the common needs of humanity.

The scientists who come in person or whose recorded voices will be heard at the British Association meeting may perhaps order the minds of leaders too narrowly bound by a national training and outlook. Their representatives will be present to hear what science can offer in reconstruction. Mr. Winant, Mr. Maisky, Dr. Wellington Koo and Mr. Benes and members of the British Government will all take part in this gathering of scientists, who know that without the will of political leaders their words will fade into the air. Nor will the scientists waste their opportunity by vague erudition or arid speculation. They will deal with the problem of the relationship of science to the State—a problem which is now one of the root problems of government. They will speak as experts with experience of applying what they discuss. The T.V.A. experiment in America is one of the few examples of rational planning for human welfare. On a far greater scale we may learn something of the successes and difficulties of the Russian Five Year Plan. Sir John Orr, the world's best expert on nutrition, will describe, among other things, the pre-war surveys

of nutrition, initiated by the League of Nations and covering twenty-six countries. In practically every country diet was inadequate to a decent life; in every country want and mal-nutrition were unnecessary. And when war is over, and the worst ravages repaired, shortage will again be unnecessary. Indeed, it will be a betrayal of our promises.

We could go on through the list of common needs which must be satisfied. Food surpluses are already being stored; they can be the most efficient of weapons and the best of peace-makers. Disease will be rampant, and here are men from many countries, experts who are exiles from enemy countries, as well as scientists of the "Quadrilateral," who know how its ravages may be stopped. Here are experts to revive agriculture and replenish the scorched and eroded earth. The decisions that are incidental to doing these things that must be done will decide the fate of Europe in the future. If we supply Poland and the Balkans with tractors we must also supply them with oil; if we rebuild industries we must plan the world's trading and raw materials. This initial task of planning for the satisfaction of human needs must be performed, not on the basis of charity or of profit, but on the commonsense basis that not to satisfy them is to hasten mankind's swift rush over the abyss. For years after the war the problems of frontiers and minorities and constitutions that engaged the labours of the men of Versailles will be secondary to this task of salvage. If the scientists can convince the politicians of this truth, problems of collaboration on wider issues that now seem insuperable may find their solution in the experience of joint work on practical tasks that equally affect us all.

AMERICA TALKS TO JAPAN

[This article provides, we believe for the first time, some background information about the discussions that have been proceeding between Washington and Tokio. The author is one of the best-informed American journalists who has been resident for eight years in this country and whose former experience included reporting from the Far East.]

POLITICAL events of importance, which have escaped the notice of the British press, are reported in connection with the Far East. In the course of the current Washington-Tokio diplomatic talks, President Roosevelt is reliably said to have warned Japan against spreading herself in the north as well as in the south. America has thus taken a stand not only against Japanese expansion in Thailand and in United States, British Empire or Dutch possessions, but also —significantly—against a Japanese attack on Russia.

Britain and the United States have never been locked in closer unison in the Pacific than now. So a few British diplomats and politicians who may once have hoped to win temporary immunity for the Empire east of Suez by turning Japan against the Soviets can now toss any such notion into the nearest dustbin.

United States opposition to Japan's conquest of Russian territory would harmonise with America's traditional policy. Theodore Roosevelt's mediation, which ended the Russo-Japanese war in 1905, was partly calculated to keep Japan's appetite within bounds. At the 1921 Washington Conference Charles Evans Hughes, then American Secretary of State, curbed his dislike of the Soviet Union in order to insist that the Japanese Army evacuate Eastern Siberia and Northern Sakhalien. By compelling the Japanese to clear out in the spring of 1922, Hughes was instrumental in restoring Russian rule in those provinces.

In their present reckoning with Japan the Democracies, in turn, are receiving indirect but valuable support from Russia. Moscow's assurance that the Red Army and Air Force in the Far East remains intact both in man-power and material, despite staggering losses on the Russo-German front, means a strengthening of America and the British Commonwealth in dealing with Japan. London and Washington furthermore now know that if they cease appeasing Japan, they run no risk of being double-crossed by Russia. Russia is moving closer to the America-British-Dutch-Chinese front in East Asia.

Meanwhile, the blurred outline of Roosevelt's attempts to reach a new Pacific settlement with Japan is coming into focus. The picture may never be developed or may remain a negative. The American-Japanese talks have been wrapped in thick secrecy and the pitiless questions of Washington journalists at White House and State Department press conferences have failed to smoke out information. But some indications, which we believe to be accurate, are now available. They tell us a good deal about what has been happening behind the diplomatic curtain.

The prelude to the present talks is said to have been a Washington proposal, made some time before Japan in July sprawled over Indo-China, suggesting the neutralisation—on the Swiss pattern—of Indo-China and Thailand. Japan's veiled annexation of Indo-China squelched this plan.

Evidence that Roosevelt returned from his conference with Churchill still anxious to avoid war in the Pacific can be seen in the report that he then made a new offer to Japan: the unfreezing of Japanese assets and lifting of trade embargoes on condition that Japan withdraws from Indo-China. News of this offer created an unhappy impression among the Chinese, who were shocked by the thought that America was ready again to become "the arsenal of autocracy" if the Japanese gave up only Indo-China. Tokio, however, answered this proposal evasively.

The conversations reached a third stage when the Japanese replied with what appears to have been a remarkable two-point plan, first, for a standstill in the armament of Singapore, Dutch East Indies, Philippines and Australia, and, secondly, for the use of America's influence to achieve a Sino-Japanese peace settlement.

Even the preposterous suggestion of unilateral arms limitation for the Democracies' outposts in the Pacific did not deter Washington from agreeing to carry on the conversations, though the American Government at first showed no inclination to let the Japanese drag out the talks with their familiar talent for out-sitting anyone at a green table. Eager to avoid letting his beard turn white while the Japanese meditated, Uncle Sam is said to have earmarked one month for the conversations. That period, which lapsed this week, has been extended and there are even signs that the United States are ready to spin out the negotiations.

Up to this point we have been able to present what we believe to be a fairly exact narrative of the American talks with Japan, but it takes us just beyond mid-August. Our knowledge of events in the past month is more sketchy. We know Admiral Nomura, the Japanese Ambassador, handed Roosevelt a letter from Prince Konoye, the Premier. According to newspaper stories which have not been contradicted, the message expressed Konoye's desire to meet the President at a Pacific conference, perhaps aboard a battleship, aping though not paralleling the Atlantic consultations with Churchill. One fancies that the President would be more inclined to entertain such a suggestion as the crowning rather than the preliminary act in his efforts to pacify the Pacific.

Then, too, we know that the American-Japanese talks have been accompanied by a hardening of the United States boycott of Japan. When America froze Japanese assets on July 26th, it was understood that she would reduce exports to Japan to the 1935-36 standard, but in practice trade seems to have been throttled much below that level. As Japan starts nibbling at her precious two-year reserves of oil and other war materials, she listens more receptively to reason.

To avoid illusions, let it be said that there are still leaks in the United States embargo against Japan. They are not big, but are causing some scratching of chins. America has brought to a dead stop the sale to Japan of steel, scrap iron, machine tools and several but not all war-making products. Surplus cotton stocks are estimated at 14,000,000 bales, and the cotton-growing south is a powerful political factor. It is anguish for Roosevelt to deprive the south of the Japanese market, and American cotton, though on a reduced scale, continues to be shipped to Japan. To many it is less understandable that, while the Dutch and British have entirely blocked petroleum exports to Japan, America is reported still to be selling her some oil suitable for lower grade aviation petrol.

Beyond the facts described, we are compelled to resort to rumour and conjecture, so we prefer awaiting further authentic news to complete the picture. As yet it is impossible to assess the truth of stories that a Japanese military withdrawal from China, or at least from Central and South China, is also under discussion. China has never wavered in demanding complete Japanese withdrawal as the first condition of peace.

There is no confirmation of the New York *Herald-Tribune's* Washington report that the United States are making a new deal in the Pacific dependent on Japan's exodus from China. Some sharp-eared diplomats, who hear the grass grow in Washington, are sceptical. Indeed, there are even reports, which deserve to be recorded, that certain American officials would like to drag a nineteenth-century solution out of the mothballs: recognition of Japan's special economic position in China in return for a reopening of the door to American business there. If any country has reason to fear a possible American-Japanese agreement it would seem to be China rather than Russia.

Powerful Japanese business interests and a number of more cautious politicians are said to favour the Army's retirement from China. Their price is international acknowledgment of Japan's economic predominance in China. This school is said to include the hug

Mitsubishi and Sumitomo trusts and statesmen and diplomats ranging from Court Chamberlain Matsudaira, Minister of Home Affairs Hiranuma, and the retired elder statesman Count Makino to Admiral Nomura and the departed ambassador to Britain, Shigemitsu. It is unclear to what extent the readiness of these Tories to cut Japan's losses in China is shared in the Army and Navy, which remain the determining forces.

Is Franklin D. Roosevelt to tread in Theodore Roosevelt's footsteps by negotiating peace between Japan and her adversary, who this time is China? Will the American-Japanese talks, if successful, lead Japan to break with the Axis? Are the talks with America simply a screen behind which Japan bides her time to invade Russia when Hitler will have drained or smashed Soviet power? We do not know.

But we do know that the Japanese, though at reduced speed, are still swinging around a dangerous curve. Public opinion tests show about 70 per cent. of Americans ready to support Roosevelt's restraint of Japanese aggression even at the risk of war; the corresponding percentage of Americans prepared to chance war for Roosevelt's anti-Nazi policy is only 55. The Japanese must realise that if the President is leading the American people against Germany, he is still holding them back from Japan.

FREDERICK KUH

HITLER'S EUROPE

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

HITLER'S economic plans for Europe are well known. He aims at creating a Greater Germany, which is to be the pivot of the entire European system. Germany is to have the pick of everything, and all other countries are to adjust their economics so as to fit in with German needs. Round Germany the lesser industrial countries are to form a ring of satellites, with freedom to develop their own industries only to the extent to which their claims do not conflict with those of the Germans. The rest of Europe is to be populated by hewers of wood and drawers of water—that is, by producers of agricultural supplies and other raw materials, such as minerals, which industrialised Europe must produce within its own frontiers. Germany is to fix to her own advantage the terms of exchange between herself and these other countries, as she was largely doing by means of her policy of economic penetration before the war. The economic systems of other continents are to be forced to fit in with German needs by the threat of exclusion from European markets unless they comply with German demands. This threat is directed in particular against the United States, and the Americans are to be told that, unless they toe the line, there will be no one to buy from them their surpluses of agricultural and other primary produce. Great Britain does not fit into this scheme of world exploitation; and accordingly the fate assigned to us is complete ruin, by the destruction of our industries and therewith the starvation of such of us as cannot scratch a bare living from our own soil.

This prospect is so bleak that it is no wonder if the policy of appeasement is no longer popular even among those Englishmen who greatly prefer Nazism to Socialism as a basis for the economic system. Hitler, many of them can now see, is past being appeased, even if a policy of appeasement once seemed to them to be possible. The question many of them are now asking is not whether it is practicable to come to terms with Nazi Germany for an economic share-out, but whether, even when the Nazis are beaten in the war, a substantial part of the Nazi-planned new order in Europe is not likely to survive. For the Nazis' economic plans were never merely nonsense or *merely* predatory—predatory to the limit as they undoubtedly were and are. Europe does stand badly in need of concerted planning and economic unification—so much so that, for certain countries, it is even arguable that conditions will be better under German exploitation than they were in the days of nominal political and economic independence before Nazi penetration and conquest began.

Naturally, this is not true of the more developed countries—of Holland or Belgium or Norway or Denmark or France. It is probably not true of Italy, and certainly not of Czechoslovakia. But for the desperately poor peasant countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe it may well be better, in a purely economic sense, to have a market in Germany, even with the terms of exchange rigged against them, than to have no market at all, which was to a great extent their plight during the period of Germany's eclipse. Throughout those years these peasant countries staggered along with little or no help from France or Great Britain. Their populations rose fast, so that more and more people were crowded upon the land. They were in the paradoxical position of desperately needing to export food surpluses which did not exist; for they could not produce a surplus without buying imports which they could not afford. When the Germans came, and offered them a market, they were not disposed to argue about terms. Any market was better than none; and they set to work to produce what Germany wanted, and took in exchange what Germany was prepared to give them, which was, at the worst, much better than nothing.

This explains why most of the peasants in Southern and Eastern Europe were not anti-Nazi, at any rate until the Nazis had already occupied their countries. Occupation has worsened their situation, because now the German armies sweep away their produce, while German industry can spare even less than before to pass on to them in exchange. For this reason, and also for nationalist reasons, the peasants tend to become more hostile to the Nazis under war conditions. This is particularly true in Yugoslavia which attempted, desperately late, to stem Hitler's advance: today, stimulated by Russian resistance, two revolts on a considerable scale are making things difficult for the Nazi invader.

The position is different in the industrial countries which the Nazis have over-run. For, even if the economic ruin, or at least subordination, of these countries is on the schedule for accomplishment after the war, the Germans do not want to ruin them now. They have good reason for this: they need these countries' products, both of war supplies and of civilian supplies to supplement the depleted resources of German industry. Germany herself is acutely short of man-power, and there are limits to the policy of importing workers—especially skilled workers—from the occupied countries. Even apart from this, it would be impracticable to move plant on a large scale from these countries into Germany—or, rather, even if the machines could be moved, factories could not be built for their reception, and there would be enormous delays before they could be got into production. Accordingly, it pays the Germans, under war conditions, to stimulate industrial output in the countries which they have conquered, and to induce the employing classes in these countries to collaborate with them by kind treatment and the continuance of profitable conditions of work. Many of these employers, if they look forward, must know that they are on the list to be ruined, for the profit of German industry, if the Nazis win the war. But for the time being they are not doing so badly, as long as they jump to obey German orders; and in a world as uncertain as ours the present counts for nearly everything, and the future is discounted at a very high rate.

As these factories are kept at work on German orders, the workers in them get employment, which again is better than nothing, even if wages will buy but little, and rationing is terribly severe. It is often said that the industrial workers in the occupied countries are starving, and therefore near the edge of revolt. It is true enough that they are very hungry, above all in Belgium, which depends so largely on imported food. But they are not so hungry as they would be if the Germans did not want to keep them at work; and the easiest punishment for those who threaten to be insubordinate is loss of employment—which means starvation indeed. The industrial workers no doubt for the most part hate the Nazis bitterly; but it does not follow that they will easily revolt, especially if the employers, instead of joining in a national anti-Nazi movement, are largely collaborating with the Nazis in the hope of keeping their profits. It is well worth the Nazis' while thus to divide masters and men, in order to make revolt harder. Nevertheless there is plenty of evidence that in Poland and, above all, in Czechoslovakia working-class revolt simmers beneath the surface, waiting its opportunity.

To a substantial extent the need to keep industrial production active in the occupied industrial areas of Europe limits the Nazis' power to carry out their plans of European economic reorganisation until the war is over. They cannot afford to ruin those whom they mean to ruin, because for the time being the German industries in whose interests the ruin is to be brought about cannot supply Germany's needs. For this reason the Nazis can go much further with their long-run plans in the agricultural than in the industrial occupied areas; for food needs differ much less than industrial needs in war and peace, and the concentration of German industrial effort on war production creates huge gaps which can be filled by imports from the industrial areas of Europe.

From the standpoint of winning the war this is a disadvantage; for it limits the wartime shortage in Germany itself, and therewith the prospect of war weariness among the German people. From the standpoint of post-war reconstruction, on the other hand, it is an advantage, on the assumption of victory; for it means that European industries will not have been ruined by the German occupation. From the standpoint of wartime propaganda, however, it is again

a disadvantage; for it keeps the richer classes in the industrial countries more inclined to co-operate with Germany, in order to save their property from ruin, than to take risks in the cause of national revolt.

This situation has its bearing on plans, which are coming back under discussion after a longish interval, for lifting the food blockade on certain European countries, especially Belgium. It is argued that Americans should administer relief in Belgium, as they did in the last war, both as a measure of humanity and because our propaganda is likely to be more effective if we appeal as suppliers of food than if we can be represented as the country responsible for the starvation of the European peoples. This argument has its attractions; but there are reasons for scepticism. The Germans themselves cannot afford to let starve the workers in the occupied territories whose output they need. They are bound to feed them—not, of course, well, but up to a standard which will keep them effectively at work—except when they resort to starvation as a deliberate punitive measure against sabotage or refusal to collaborate with the Nazi rulers. Such positive starvation as exists in Western Europe to-day is largely punitive. Acute shortage is, of course, another matter; and shortage has recently been aggravated by the diversion of supplies, and of transport, to meet the colossal needs of the campaign in the East. But it is doubtful if, under these circumstances, the admission of American supplies could fail to release further supplies for use in the East, and thus to strengthen the Nazi onslaught on the Soviet Union.

This way of stating the problem leaves out of account the question whether we or the Americans could spare the ships, even if the case for supplying, say, Belgium were in other respects made out. That is an expert matter on which the outsider cannot venture an opinion. Quite apart from that, it would be more difficult than ever, under present conditions, to arrange for terms of supply which would effectively prevent the diversion to war use of provisions the Nazis would otherwise have had, in their own interest, to consign to occupied Western Europe. The case for greater medical supplies, in a large sense of the term, stands on a different footing; and an extended programme for such supplies could well be taken in hand through the American Red Cross.

The general upshot of this article is that, under war conditions, hatred of the Germans is probably easier to convert into positive action in Eastern and Southern Europe than in most parts of the industrialised West. This does not mean that we ought to relax our efforts in the West: it does mean that it is of the greatest importance to concert measures with the Soviet Union for a combined campaign of propaganda directed to the agrarian East. But that campaign will be ineffective unless we can promise markets, capital for industrial development, and perhaps, above all else, freedom of migration from congested areas in the new Europe of to-morrow.

A LONDON DIARY

NOTHING could have been worse handled than the Moore-Brabazon affair. A Minister who made such remarks when our survival and Russia's survival are inextricably bound together ought to have had the decency to resign at once. If he did not, Mr. Churchill should have asked for his resignation. When Mr. Churchill failed to remove from the direction of Aircraft Production a Minister whose presence there must inevitably demoralise the workers who happen to understand the war better than Col. Moore-Brabazon, some Member of Parliament had to raise the question. It should have been raised by some very solid supporter of the Government. It should not have been left to Mr. Gallacher; but if it was raised by Mr. Gallacher he should have put his request in inoffensive language. Mr. Churchill, who is usually a good parliamentarian, ought to have known better than to lose his temper in reply. Mr. Gallacher should then not have put himself in the wrong by shouting wild abuse and having to apologise for it afterwards. He ought to have known that he would have to apologise, for the Communist Party gives its support "unreservedly," in Harry Pollitt's phrase, to Mr. Churchill. The unfortunate result of this chapter of errors is that Col. Moore-Brabazon is still there and that both the Russians and the factory workers know it.

* * *

I am not sure how far Mr. Churchill is in touch with working-class opinion. He has an instinctive understanding of a traditional England. I doubt if he would easily realise the importance of a series of indignant resolutions about Moore-Brabazon's speech from a number of the main arms production factories in this country. Perhaps he never hears of such resolutions; I wonder if he has ever had a heart-to-heart talk with a shop steward. If he should see a copy of the *British Worker* which bears a curious resemblance to the banned Daily, he would find in the second issue a call for production that should please him as much as the news that Harry Pollitt called on a vast meeting in Montague Place to put forward every energy to winning the war. I wonder if Mr. Churchill and Mr. Pollitt have ever been introduced? They have much in common; they are both very English indeed; they are both great speakers and they both have the kind of force and resolution that makes for leadership.

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In a caustic reference to the publicity campaign for recruiting the A.T.S. the *Times* remarked the other day that "these calls to women really cannot and should not be handled like the selling of a patent medicine." How far does this criticism apply to many Government publicity schemes at the present time? Fear is the motive chiefly exploited by advertising experts, most of whom are now employed on Government schemes. Fear of illness and decay sells patent medicines; fear of being unattractive sells cosmetics and a hundred other things that we do not want; fear of looking less smart than other people persuades thousands of women to waste their money on the sort of luxuries that do not produce happiness. And so, it is argued, a publicity scheme telling us that Hitler will not give us warning will persuade us to carry gas masks. The response? Nil. We don't carry gas masks. Why? Because people do not believe, while Russia is bearing the brunt of the German attack, that the Germans will suddenly launch a gas attack here. Moreover, the warning has been too often repeated. People carried their gas masks in the first few months of the war and then gave it up. If some day the Government tells us that there are signs that the Germans are preparing for an invasion and concentrating gas on the coast of France, we shall all put on our gas masks in double quick time. This campaign seems to have been ill-advised—another case of crying woif. One can sympathise with a Minister who wants to be able to say that if we are caught napping it was not his fault, but the moment and the method were ill-judged. I have asked a number of publicity people lately about these campaigns. All of them agree that saturation-point has been reached and that people do not respond to "pep talks."

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I could give a list of campaigns executed with great skill and cost which have yet turned out to be total failures. The usual reaction when the voluntary appeal fails is for the authority to jump to the opposite conclusion. What people want, they say, is not an appeal but compulsion; they want to be told what to do and are happy to take orders. Here, I think, is a dangerous and illogical slip in the mental cogs. The mass of the public often prefers clear instructions to pep talks, because it knows that the universal order (with the proper exceptions for the hard case) is the most efficient method. But it must first be convinced of the need for the order. Compulsion is only the final stage and should never be applied until it is almost unnecessary and the number to be compelled against their will is few. The missing cog is the most important part of the whole relationship between public and Ministers in a democracy. That cog is explanation. The job of the Minister is to give us facts and tell us why this must be done and how to do it. Some of the Ministry of Food campaigns have been successful because people understand that the usual food supplies are short or lacking, and are therefore prepared for information about alternative diets and how to cook things that are on the market; but you cannot persuade people to do things for which they do not see the necessity; nor is it either wise or right to compel them to do things the desirability of which they do not understand. The *Times* is right—the technique of selling a patent medicine is totally unsuitable to the job of war propaganda. The advertiser's function is to put over to the public their part in co-operating in a policy of whose necessity they are already convinced.

* * *

One result of this failure frankly to take the public into the Government's confidence in small things as well as in big (Mr. Churchill's speeches in the summer of 1940 were an example of the right policy) is that people try to evade regulations instead of co-operating. When government regulates the life of the people in its smallest details (two handkerchiefs, one coupon; one vest, four coupons), only full understanding of the need for the regulation will prevent ration-cheating becoming a form of sport. Why, for instance, should we not know more about the details of clothes rationing? Coupons themselves tell Germany the main point; that we have to economise our distribution of textiles. It is not Germany

it is Britain, which would profit by more information. Of course, every thinking person realises the problem: the textile industry must share its raw materials, its skill, and its plant, all limited, between at least three competing demands: the Services, the civil population and supply. We also dimly apprehend that mass production and distribution would be the most efficient way of sharing out the available stuffs, but that this would entail a deplorable slaughter of small plants and distributors.

* * *

An unfair advantage is now enjoyed by the rich, who are able to buy clothes made of expensive materials, so that their clothes are worth two or three times as much, in terms of wear, as those of the poor. There is also the sharp rise in cost of living caused by the need to buy ready-made clothes for little children. This has always been a purely luxury trade, and the prices charged are fantastic. Clothes for babies are easy and pleasant to make, and 98 per cent. of them have always been made by their mothers and aunts. But the coupons will not run to anything like enough wool for knitting or material for sewing (2 ounces of wool, one coupon). Thirdly comes the ludicrous inadequacy of the layette allowance: 50 coupons, out of which a woman must contrive maternity clothes for herself and an outfit for her baby (one nappie, one coupon). When these mistakes are righted I suppose we shall all be dressed in standard suits and dresses. I can only hope that the Government will not inflict the torture upon the whole population that it has upon the Army, with the itching, skin-abrasive stuff of the battle-dress. (Why, I wonder, was it necessary to manufacture this horror when Air Force uniform is made of quite decent material?) And the authorities should realise that if they try to clothe the whole population in some awful colour like khaki, the most unbecoming that ever came out of the dye-vat, there will be a Women's Revolt.

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I wish I could persuade thousands of people who have read Vansittart's *Black Record*, to read two pamphlets which have just come out. Neither of them is a full answer to Vansittart, but both of them discuss the problem in adult terms. *Why Is Germany Aggressive?* by the Socialist Clarity Group (N.C.L.C. Publishing Society, 3*d*.) is an able examination of the forces leading to aggression in Germany and a consideration of the possibilities of European collaboration when working-class Germany is again able to assert itself. *A New Order in Germany*, by G. O. G. Luetkens (National Peace Council, 3*d*.) examines the nature of German economy and points out accurately that its lack of balance and the need of its heavy industries for new markets, either by penetration or war, is the primary reason for the growth of the aggressive spirit in German politics during the last two generations. Mr. Luetkens shows why world catastrophe produced more unemployment in Germany than in Britain; the difficulty of solving this problem under capitalism by any method except that of armaments, and the opportunity which this situation gave to Hitler. Mr. Luetkens agrees with the Socialist Clarity Group, that larger units than the sovereign States of Versailles are essential, and that the aggressive nature of the German economic structure can only be cured by a Socialist revolution in Germany. The classes which profit by aggression must be liquidated and a Germany recreated which can be one prosperous unit in a prosperous Europe. I discussed this problem with a very influential Conservative the other day. When we reached this conclusion I remarked that it sounded very like international Socialism. "Yes," he said, "it does sound very like that." He did not seem shocked.

* * *

Mr. Bevin was very off-hand in dealing with the M.P.s who wanted to know what was being done about the Trade Union official recently pilloried by the Committee on National Expenditure for his high-handed and obstructive conduct in an unnamed shipyard. He could not, he said, take any proceedings on hearsay evidence. This is surely unsatisfactory. Mr. Bevin must know perfectly well, in his private if not in his official capacity, that the charges made by the Committee on the National Expenditure did not fairly represent what had happened. Until the Boilermakers' Society, which is the Union concerned, gives a full account of what really occurred, a lot of people will continue to believe, not merely that one minor official of a particular Trade Union has been doing his best to impede the war effort, but that the Trade Union Movement as a whole has something to hide. Which I think is untrue.

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Walking home in the dark the other night a voice remarked in my ear: "There's this to be said for the blitz; it does distract one's mind from the black-out."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to J. T. Shrouder.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

That God was not just a referee watching and controlling the game from aloof, but rather was He the centre-forward of the home team, helping to shape its course, was one of the metaphors employed by the Bishop of Bradford (Dr. A. W. F. Blunt) when he was the chief speaker at a Youth Rally in the Cathedral Close on Wednesday evening.—*The Blackburn Times.*

By one vote the Enniskillen Urban Council yesterday permitted a military band concert on a Sunday, in aid of military charities, says our Enniskillen Correspondent, but refused the general public permission to attend.—*The Irish Times.*

When the Finance Committee recommended the completion of the purchase of 20, Sophia Place, Councillor Spickernell asked if the Education Committee proposed to proceed with the erection of an art school on that site. He thought they should direct their attention more to reading, writing and arithmetic instead of drawing pictures of nude men.—*Portsmouth Evening News.*

Wanted, Ursula Bloom's "Cad's Guide to Cruising"; exchange Coty liquefying cream, 5/6 jar.—Advt. in *The Lady.*

He had an opportunity of talking to the Mayor about the possibility of the meetings of the Town Council beginning with a prayer and the Council almost unanimously agreed to it. Were they surprised that the season which followed was a record one for the town?—The Vicar of St. George's Church, Ramsgate, reported in *Thanet Advertiser and Echo.*

GIVE US THE TOOLS

"If the United States are to fulfil the task they have set themselves . . . there will have to be a further curtailment of civilian consumption.
PRIME MINISTER, September 9th.

The Battle Fleet of the United States
Ensures that none shall Britain's lifeline sunder,
How deadly the reception that awaits
The raider on the seas, the U-boat under!
How loud the fanfare, and how small the freights!
How safely brought to harbour! And no wonder!
Since he may not sink convoys with impunity,
How loath the foe to seize the opportunity!

America can look for no Dunkirk
To underline the warnings Presidential,
She can expect no salutary jerk
Compelling shortage in the non-essential.
Well-chosen words may often wonders work,
But arms in warfare are more influential,
And there's no argument like mass-production
Commensurate with the rate of mass-destruction.

What favourable hour, once lost, returns?
What conqueror blenches at a Declaration?
If London falls at last, if Moscow burns,
Of what avail the U.S. demonstration?
How readily the enemy discerns
There is no fire-power in a fine quotation!
Without equipment, what crusade continues?
The port of Mars depends upon his sinews.

The preservation of the proposition
That freedom's not to yield, or sell or barter
Demands tanks, bombers, guns and ammunition,
Or freedom's citizen must fall a martyr,
Wiped out to show its total abolition,
Shrouded in sheets of the Atlantic Charter,
While the White House, and towers of Manhattan
Are neatly fitted in the Nazi pattern.

Give us the tools! The enemy makes way,
Smashing through Europe, Africa and Asia!
Not Frigidaires or Fords keep doom at bay,
Aerial bombardment is not euthanasia.
The trickle flows, the flood has gone astray.
The time is come for action, and aphasia!
Give us the tools to end the job ahead of us,
Or else the foe will finish it instead of us!

SAGITTARIUS

ADVANCED LANDING GROUND

THE first light was grey, unpleasing. It came through the grubby windows of the seaside boarding-house which housed, instead of boarders, the pilots of the detached Flight.

Ford, waking, wondered why he felt that the light oughtn't to be there. He remembered. The pilots were to be at readiness in their cockpits, at first light. He had arranged to go up to the landing ground with them to see that the signalling system worked. The C.O. had taken the alarm clock and promised to wake him.

He looked again at the window. It was raining: visibility not much more than 400 yards on the ground. Ten-tenths' cloud at 200 feet (ten-tenths means that sky is completely covered). The C.O. had probably woken up, decided the weather was non-operational, and gone back to bed again. Ford wondered whether he had better wake him up again, though, just in case? He lurched along the passage. The C.O. was sleeping quietly. The alarm clock was on the dressing-table and didn't look as if it had gone off, somehow.

Ford took hold of the small-boned shoulder that stuck out of the bed-clothes. The C.O. woke at once. Ford said, "It's light, sir. Do you want to go up there? It's filthy weather." The pilot looked at the window, the clock. It was 6 a.m. He said, "Blast that bloody clock—it's not gone off." He slid out of bed. "Wake up Rubber and we'll get weaving." Ford went to the next room and woke the other pilot who was due to go to readiness. He was a sergeant-pilot of 22 whom they called Rubber. But he didn't bounce at that hour.

In five minutes they met, more or less uniformed, in the hall. The C.O. had put on Mrs. Roberts' electric kettle while they dressed. Ford had requisitioned an old Austin Ten from the butcher as detachment transport. It had stood outside all night. It wouldn't start. Plugs wet again. They dried them. It started on two cylinders. They got into motion. By the time they got to the hill up to the landing ground some more cylinders began to fire. They arrived. The two old fighters, knocked-about looking, but hard and formidable, were at the far distant point by the sea. What wind there was came from the North over the landward end, by the hut. So the aircraft had had to be left at the other end in order to take off into wind. The rain drizzled on. Cloud was a bare 150 feet off the deck. You could just see the other end of the little landing ground.

Ford thought, "He'll call it non-operational and go back to bed." They bumped on over the rough surface and the wet slippery grass. It was certainly *not* an ideal spot from which to operate fighter aircraft.

When they got to the aircraft the C.O. said nothing. He looked pinched and cold. He got into the cockpit of his own aircraft, A; Rubber got into S. So apparently they were to operate. The crews looked glum, but resigned themselves to four hours of wetting.

Ford wondered whether there was any point.

How on earth did the C.O. think he was going to see an E/A (enemy aircraft) in this, even if one was as foolish as they and operated? It was cold in a flat, soaked, gutless sort of way.

Ford went to the telephone hut. The two telephone operators which the Army had lent them had turned up and seemed to understand his explanation of what to do in the unlikely event of anything being seen by the observer points. He sat down. He read the notices pinned up in the hut. He read the list of the observer points' telephone numbers. He read the long, pessimistic notice put up by the Air Line which used the landing ground, disclaiming responsibility for the lives of its passengers or the safety of their luggage. The light got a little stronger. But the cloud was, if anything, lower. He re-read the notice of the Air Line, disclaiming responsibility, etc.

The telephone bell rang. He picked the receiver out of the hands of the Army telephonist. The voice said, "St. Thomas speaking" (their Northerly observer post). The voice began officially, "Unidentified aircraft flying about in a suspicious manner." But passed into the vernacular: "'E do sound like a Jerry to us." Unidentified Sound plot—Ford thought whilst he was listening—can't send them up for that in this. He argued against sending them up in his mind. "It's sure to be only some Stooge Blenheim—and it's a hundred to one against them seeing it at that."

Sergeant Grange came into the hut. Ford said, "Hold on" into the instrument, and to the Sergeant, "Unidentified Sound plot—can't send them up in this, do you think?" The Sergeant said, "No, I wouldn't, sir." Ford had held the receiver away from his ear: it began to crackle. Ford put it to his ear again: it was saying, "We seen it, gone again now—no, there 'tis—looks like a Jerry to us—Dornier maybe—flying South." Ford said to Grange, "They've seen it—got to send them off now." The Sergeant nodded. Ford grabbed the red cartridge, the signal for North, and stuffed it into the pistol. He ran out of the hut with it, and fired. As the heavy Verey pistol jarred his wrist he thought, "The C.O. and Rubber are just over there in the murk—can't even see them—blast these bloody little landing grounds—it's only 480 yards long. Hope to God they get down—it's me sending them up in this filth." Five seconds later (he timed it) he heard the roar of the motors. A, with the C.O. in it, charged out of the greyness at him. Taking off and landing were almost as exciting for the ground staff as for the pilots on the advanced landing ground. It always looked as if the aircraft would never get off. But a second later, as A thundered over the point where the ground fell away at the edge of the 'drome (where they'd pulled down the fence) the nose lifted and the C.O. was airborne. At the same moment, with another snarling roar, Rubber in S charged up, dead in the C.O.'s tracks. Then he was airborne too. Grange and Ford looked at each other. Grange said, "Well, sir, they're off." Ford said, "Not a chance of them seeing anything. Let's hope they come back soon." Soon they couldn't hear the engines. They stood about. Ford noticed gloomily how wet and skiddy the grass was.

In seven minutes (Grange timed it for the Flying Times book) they heard the engines again. Ford said, "Here they are." They saw first S and then A, 150 feet up, just under the cloud, coming in from the North-West. Ford thought: "Anyhow, they've found the aerodrome all right." But he felt depressed at the uselessness of the patrol, and wondered if the C.O. would think he shouldn't have sent them off. They were circling. A had her wheels and flaps down. The C.O. was evidently going to land first. He was half round to the seaward end of the 'drome and was disappearing Ford couldn't see Rubber in S. But he could hear him. In fact, S sounded remarkably loud—and odd, too.

Grange said sharply, "What's that, sir?" They both heard a heavy de-synchronised engine note. They hadn't time to say "Twin," when Grange pointed South-East. There, just off the aerodrome, at 50 feet up, a thick long wing had come out of the cloud. Then a heavy shape formed itself—looking vast after the fighters. "Flying boat!" Grange shouted. The shape banked, grey against grey, turning steeply away seaward again: suddenly a yellow flash came from its long nose. "He's fired—fired at the C.O.," Grange shouted. Then it was gone. The cloud closed up. For a few seconds they heard a confusion of engine notes. Then nothing. Silence. They waited.

They walked slowly down the 'drome to the seaward end. They hoped: Ford hoped so much that they had got it; he hoped so much that they would both land safely. He felt the rush of those hopes bursting up inside him. Four and a half minutes later they heard a fighter's engines, coming in from the South-East. Ford was by the wall on the South-East corner of the 'drome. A shot down into sight, flying low and fast—50 feet above their heads. Ford saw the head and shoulders of the C.O. small and still in the cockpit. The C.O. put A's wheels down as he circled once. Then he came at them again, losing height. "Look," said the Sergeant. "Look, sir, he's fired his guns." As he flashed past Ford caught a glimpse of the eight gun ports open, the canvas covers shot off. Old A looked blooded. But he also saw that the C.O. was landing at the hell of a speed. Although he only cleared their heads by ten feet, he didn't touch down till a quarter way across the nasty little field. Ford saw A shudder as her brakes were jammed on the very instant she touched down. The aircraft began to disappear into the greyness on the far side of the 'drome, still going desperately fast. "Christ? That's the shortest run of all," Ford thought. Then he saw the skid begin. A's tail began to slew, the port wing literally switched round; suddenly the prop' was facing Ford—with the whole machine still rushing backwards, tail first, away from him. It was a full Christiania turn. A couldn't be twenty yards from the edge now. Instantly he heard the roar of the motor as the C.O. opened full out to pull himself back. 1,000 horse-power threshed into the prop'. A was pulled to a stop, and then began to taxi towards Ford again.

The crew appeared. As she reached the seaward boundary they slewed her round once more, so that she stood into wind, at her dispersal point. Already they were running up to refuel. Ford ran too. The C.O. saw him coming and moved for the first time. He put one hand over the edge of the cockpit, with the thumb extended upwards. Ford jumped on to the wing. "One Dornier Flying Boat," said the C.O., speaking rather slower than usual. "Ran head on into it as I was coming in to land. Had my flaps and undercart down. Fired at me. Bloody awkward. Ruddy great thing. All covered with guns and turrets. Luckily he turned right as I turned left. Gave me time to get my undercart and flaps up. Then Rubber must have had a crack at him. Saw the flashes. Where *is* Rubber? Got round on to him. Made two quarter attacks from astern. He hadn't a chance. Saw my bullets tearing into him. Rear gunners stopped firing. Closed to fifty yards. He was still flying along all right. Then suddenly gave a lurch and began to go down. Thought he might make quite a nice landing in the sea. But no. One wing went right down. In he went a—fearful smash. Something was burning in him already. Thought he would float. Then just after he was hit there was a God awful flash; black smoke and crimson flame—bloody great beacon for nearly a minute; then everything seemed to sink. Where's Rubber? Did you see me skid?"

Ford hit him on the back, repeatedly. "Bloody good, bloody good, bloody good," he said.

The C.O.'s eyes began to peer at the over-hanging cloud. He was thinking of Rubber. Ford said, "Can you ski, sir?" "No. Why?" "Well, you did a damned good imitation of a Christiania." "No, really—Christ! I had kittens. Blast this wet grass—it's dangerous." "Did you say *dangerous*, sir?" But Ford's irony was lost—the C.O. was looking at the sky again. "Where's Rubber?"

Then they heard him droning away to the

uth, out to sea. The C.O. said, "That's n, the silly b—'s lost. But he'll make it now." e engine note rose. Then S shot across the ome fifty feet up. Rubber banked once, let his undercart and flaps, and began to come from the sea-end. He was under cliff level start with. He rose just enough to clear the f and came in towards them not ten feet up. e C.O. began to shout—almost as if he thought could make Rubber hear. "Get up—get up oh, get up—you silly b—! You'll under-ot. Get up!" But Rubber began to lose ght. He touched down exactly on the ward boundary of the 'drome, where it ed off into the rough moorland of the cliff . His starboard wheel hit something (after-rds they found a sizeable boulder). This time bber bounced. S leaped up ten feet or so d came down heavily inside the 'drome undary. She began to run, veering to star-rd. After forty yards—still moving at 60 70—down went one wing. The starboard co leg had buckled. The nose went down, the op' hit and splintered: she came to a jarring p. Rubber opened the cockpit door and lked out. The C.O. was out of his machine, , bustling over to him.

Rubber said, "Terribly sorry, sir."

"Bad luck, Rubber. You fired your guns?"

"Oh yes, two beam attacks. 250 rounds m each gun. Saw the flashes all along his elage. Then I saw you go in and finish him. ay, sir, what was he?"

"Not sure myself yet." (To Ford) "Get gen. (identification) sheet."

Ford produced it. The two pilots became sorbed, looking through the pictures of inkels—Junkers—Focke Wulf. Rubber said, I say, sir, did my eyes deceive me or were re two prop's in line—a pusher and puller?"

"Well, I thought that, too. Yes, by God! re it is—Dornier 18 flying boat. That's it ctly. Great big hulking thing—convoy, nnaissance, mine laying."

They read the description of the flying boat h all the enthusiasm of collectors who have gged an exceedingly rare specimen.

Rubber said, "I say, sir, absolutely branders, sn't it? Not a speck on the paint even."

"And showers of mods. (modifications). body great turrets and blisters stuck all over it."

"Seemed able to fire on me from any angle, "

"You're telling me—had my wheels and ps down when he fired on me—bloody awk-rd if you hadn't kept him busy to begin with."

"How many did she carry, do you think, ?"

"Five or six at least. Wonder if any of them uld be alive in the drink. Have the rescue ats gone out?"

Ford said, "Oh yes, sir. The telephonists ll have told them to go out. Shall we go over d see if they've got a bearing from the observer ints?"

They walked over to the hut.

"Not that there'll be anything but bods odies) at the most," the C.O. went on. "I ought she was going to float. Then that ddy great flash came, and when I looked next re was nothing but bits and pieces. Still, d out the boats."

When they got to the hut, they found that the server point to the S.E. had seen the flash, d wreckage burning for a few seconds. ey had given the boats an accurate bearing. he boats stayed out nearly three hours, but nd nothing).

The next shift of pilots to go to readiness med up.

The C.O. said, "Well, we've got a Dornier ng boat so far to-day."

The crews were already at work on S, which ked very forlorn and lopsided, and right oss the best run in this wind. But in another ty minutes they'd got the back of an old farm-cart under her starboard wing and had wheeled her into the side. (A few days later Rubber was walking past her with Ford. They saw that her new Oleo leg had been fitted. Rubber heaved a sigh of relief. "Looks just like an invalid that's got on to her feet again doesn't she, sir?").

Then they went down to the boarding-house for breakfast. Ford found himself beginning the futile game—and it is never so futile as in war—of counting up the "ifs." *If* the first light hadn't wakened him, five German airmen would no doubt be having breakfast with their *Staffel* (the German equivalent to a Squadron) at, say, Stavanger. (On the other hand, his part in the affair could and should have been played by a more reliable type of alarm clock). But *if*, now, the C.O. had circled the other way; *if* Rubber hadn't been just behind him to make those first two beam attacks; *if* the cloud had come down another fifty feet while they were airborne; *if* the C.O. and Rubber hadn't been perfectly trained, expert and highly aggressive pilots—*if* any one of the million million combinations of circumstances had been different—the Germans might have been breakfasting with their *Staffel*, some thousands of tons of British shipping would have been sunk or endangered, and the C.O. and Rubber——. Instead of which: which was satisfactory, as far as it went.

FLYING OFFICER

AMERICAN SUMMER

UNTIL June of this year my memories of America were framed in a wintry background. Icicles hung from the rigging of the ship from whose deck I first saw the steel and concrete mountains of Manhattan. The Hudson lay frozen below the Catskill heights, while its confident outlines repeated on a nobler scale the contour of the Rhine Valley. It was always over glittering snow that the bell of the railway train tolled, as it carried me through Boston. These white landscapes, for all their majesty, were lifeless. I had seen in this continent every colour save green, for the trees were always stripped and the fields, when the snowdrifts melted, a sad yellow. If ever there were animals in this white silence, they had gone to sleep: if ever there were birds, they had migrated to Florida or the West Indies. I recall the moment of rejoicing when first I heard a sparrow twittering in New York. Like the Ancient Mariner, when he saw the snakes upon the lifeless ocean, I blessed them unawares; for even here, where all else was masonry and mechanism, Nature had fluttered in. But sparrows, like starlings, are alien immigrants in the New World: some homesick Pilgrim fetched their ancestors from Europe.

But now I have seen an American summer. I have survived its torrid heat and its tropical rains. I have tried to count its innumerable shades of green; I have pestered my friends to name for me its unfamiliar trees, and wakened at dawn to wonder how many of its singing birds I could identify. A European, when he first enjoys the pageant of the American countryside, passes through a phase of bewildered recognition. Nothing is quite the same and yet it is not wholly different. Certainly that is an oak: the same idea, the same *quercus* pattern has shaped its leaves, and yet they are different and like everything in this continent, bolder and bigger. As the days go on, I note several species of oak, none of them identical with our own. The elms spread to an outline of their own: their *élan vital* has carried their branches outwards to a slightly different rhythm. As for the birds, I can sometimes recognise a typical thrush theme in their songs, but it stops short and lacks the European *coda*. I know this language but it has dialects never spoken in our woods. At home or abroad: where am I? It is both at once. It recalls a familiar type of dream which has haunted most of us. I am talking to my little sister. But Mary was never as tall as that and her hair was never that golden brown. She is wearing the dress in which my first love won my heart, and yet I know that this dream-woman is certainly Mary, my only sister. And so it is with this American bird: she has clothed herself in strange colours: she has twisted her mother-tongue, and yet waking or sleeping, I know her for my sister the thrush.

Americans call this bird the robin. Assuredly it has a red breast, but its tone is darker and richer than our robin's, and there all resemblance ends. This beautiful creature is unmistakably a thrush in his gait, his proportions and the familiar tints of his greenish brown back and speckled throat. Who could fail to recognise him, when he stops short after a few hops across the lawn, throws up his head and listens for a worm? But in his misleading name you may detect the nostalgia that still haunts this American people. Was it perhaps a homesick Puritan who named him, while the *Mayflower* still lay at anchor on this unfamiliar shore? What else among the pines and cedars spoke of England? But the red breast of this lovely bird recalled the garden he had left behind him, as it hopped among the unfriendly rocks of this shallow soil. A robin it should be and a robin it is still. The same longing for the familiar reveals itself in the place-names of this New England. I sojourned first near Sheffield, a village of shady avenues, and then in Egremont; the wooded hills around me were "the Berkshires." Far away on the prairie these exiles who cannot forget founded their Oxford, where no fritillary grows. This robin, as he sings and hunts, talks to me all day about the history of his race and ours. Thousands of years ago the thrushes who sing in the two Egremonts, in Cheshire and Massachusetts, must have had a common ancestor. His gait and gestures were the same as theirs, his speckled throat and the first outline, the original draft of his song. And then, if Dr. Wegener guessed right, the New World and the Old drifted apart, and that primeval thrush slowly evolved on his floating continent the brilliant hues of his transatlantic dress. If any naturalist could tell me why in the new scene his breast went red, I should feel that I had begun to grasp the rudiments of American history. I should next have to enquire what was it in our European climate or in the dappled foliage around him that stimulated the old-world thrush to add to the ancestral song his characteristic arpeggio, a subtlety that no American bird can render?

In all my walks among the Berkshire Hills this theme of sameness and difference pursued me. The animals suggested it rather less than the flowers and birds. That piebald skunk lying dead in the road did not smell of Europe. I know that the woodchuck, whom I surprised twice or thrice, lumbering with his heavy gait across my path, is cousin to the badger, but he is bigger and surely he has longer legs. The doe that dashed from a dazzling field of buckwheat as our car approached might have been a European, but we have no creature to match the elegance of that exquisite little rodent, the chipmunk, with the decorative brown stripe along his sides, that seems to end in a squirrel's tail.

But how shall I convey the glory and bewilderment of American bird-life? Here is a new wren, as it were a mouse among birds, modest and dun to the eyes, but he sings like a chaffinch. Which of the many species of thrush was it that sang some phrases of our blackbird's song, a fifth higher—a violin to his viola? The goldfinch in his brilliant canary costume has more than the usual gaiety and sociability of his family. The mocking-bird vies in his mimicry with our starling, and the nuthatch, if a little smaller, is as tame and as acrobatic as ours and wears the same delicate colours. But the bird that chiefly pursues my astonished memory across the Atlantic has no kinsman on

our side. A group of delphiniums grew beside the porch on which I used to sit, and daily at punctual intervals a pair of humming birds would hover, patterns of crimson with black and emerald green, to suck honey from the azure cups. This Ariel defies the grossness of the law of gravity. With the earth it can have no concern, for it seems to have no feet, so tightly are they tucked below the little body. If it has wings no human eye ever saw them, so rapidly do they beat, as it floats poised in mid-air. The utmost you may detect is a whirlwind made visible. Before the dew was dry, it would pay its first visit to these flowers and its last was lit by the fireflies.

While maize and buckwheat gave novelty to the cultivated fields, the wild flowers and fruits discovered new ways of varying the endless American theme of likeness with difference. Here growing by the wayside in profusion were flowers that we have tamed for our gardens, golden rod and the evening primrose, a white Michaelmas daisy and that bold beauty "black-eyed Susan," a rudbekia. Golden rod in the first hot week of August covered the hillsides in flaming thickets, high as a man's head. Still in August the wild rose was in flower but her dark and shining leaves, though they had seven fronds, resembled those of a gardener's tea-rose rather than the dog-rose of our hedges. The blackberry also grew with a difference, for its fruit was conical in shape, a little smaller, and had a more delicate taste. I found myself in this unfamiliar scene welcoming intimate friends with continual delight, the grey-leaved mullein and the great caterpillar that preys on it, blue chickory and yellow toadflax. But if nature in this continent could repeat, she could also invent. Spectacular patches of the splendid purple ironweed grew on swampy soil near the Hudson's banks, and everywhere, prim as a Quaker maiden in her bonnet, was the white sceptre of the tall milkwort, which turns to a handsome and original seed-pod.

Finally, I began to search for absent friends. In all this continent there are no daisies. Plantains and dandelions abound, but I was startled when on the last day of my stay I met a buttercup. History records that some of these familiar European weeds—was the buttercup among them?—reached these shores for the first time as seeds in the fodder imported for General Burgoyne's cavalry. These recent importations from Europe have changed the landscape—sparrows and palefaces, horses and wheat. They have settled with none of the modesty becoming in an immigrant. The white men are possessive and the sparrows truculent. My recollections of American birds in this first summer end in the great open-air theatre among the Berkshire Hills at Hawthorne's Tanglewood. Piatigorsky had just played a gracious new concerto written for his 'cello and the Boston Orchestra by Hindemith. From the rafters, as it ended, a sparrow chirruped a noisy challenge, as who should say, "But I can do better than that." Ten thousand Americans applauded. The light was dim and I cannot be sure that the sparrow bowed.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

THE SILVER SWAN

Ah, once again I have seen—
Now when low winds are dark with sorrow and death—
Once again, over those cold and green
Deep shadows where trout move in a watery night,
I have seen the river-silvered swan:
Aye, once again I have seen, where breath
Of flowers will scent the night,
The plunge and crystal feathering of my faithful swan
Washing his wings in silver of the river's light.

ROBERT GATHORNE-HARDY

PARAEMIOLOGICAL

SELDOM does one feel more of an ignoramus than when one looks up a word in a dictionary and reads the words before and after it, most of which one has never seen before. The other day I came on the word "paraemiologists" in Mr. Andrew Guershoon's new book, *Russian Proverbs* (Muller, 8*s.* 6*d.*), and, though I guessed its meaning from the context, I turned to the *New English Dictionary* to make sure that I was right. There I was confronted by pages of words that were as strange to me as Hebrew. First came "paraffle," meaning "ostentatious display." This was followed by "parafront," a hanging for an altar. "Paragaster" was in the next column—the central or gastric cavity of a simple sponge. Paraglobulin, paragonite, and paranatellon were only three of a mass of words that, had I been asked to define them, would have left me dumb. If you want to feel humble, read a dictionary. There is no better antidote to the vanity of knowledge.

As for paraemiology—more correctly, it appears, spelt "paroemiology"—it means, according to the dictionary, the subject of proverbs, a paroemiologist being a person who treats of proverbs, and a paroemiographer one who writes them. I confess I should like to meet a paroemiographer. I have met men of many types, but never yet one who wrote proverbs. Proverbs seem to preserve the anonymity of their authorship more sucessfully than any other department of literature. It is as though the people who invented such sayings as "Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves" were ashamed of imposing such nonsense on the world. What a low mind the man must have had who first coined the sentence: "All's fair in love and war"—which was once described by a Divorce Court judge as one of the most unfortunate proverbs that ever were uttered! As children, no doubt, toiling over our copybooks, we were impressed by such jingles as "Birds of a feather flock together" and "A stitch in time saves nine"; but as we grow older we begin to doubt such pinchbeck wisdom. "No gains without pains" is well enough as an encouragement to industry; but, in the history of money-making, we find it to be untrue.

I took up a dictionary of quotations to see what the wise had said on the subject of proverbs, and I discovered that not everyone looked on them as a golden inheritance of wisdom. "Proverbs," according to Conrad, or one of his characters, "are art—cheap art. In a general rule they are not true; unless, indeed, they happen to be mere platitudes." "In all pointed sentences," said Dr. Johnson, "some degree of accuracy must be sacrificed to conciseness"; and Chesterfield was equally condemnatory of the falsity of proverbs when he wrote: "Most maxim-mongers have preferred the prettiness to the justness of a thought, and the turn to the truth." After all, when Wilde writes epigrams, everyone recognises that, though they ring, they do not ring quite true. Why should we expect to find more truth in the epigrams of Anon—for that is all that proverbs are, the memorable sayings of forgotten (perhaps, deservedly forgotten) Rochefoucaulds and Wildes.

Proverbs, however, are none the less interesting on that account; and Mr. Guershoon obviously agrees with Bacon's statement—again I turn to the dictionary of quotations—that "the genius, wit and spirit of a nation are discovered in its proverbs." He holds that "a nation's history and character are undoubtedly mirrored in its proverbs, and it can be said with certainty of some typical proverbs that they could only be the expression of thought or feeling of one particular nation, and not of any other." Certainly some of the proverbs he quotes have only a local application. "Wherever the fish go, they must go to the Holy Nose in the end" is a proverb that would convey lit to any one but an Archangel fisherman, Holy Nose being a cape in the Arctic Oce Again, outside certain sects in Russia, no could feel much moral response to "Vaccinati is the seal of Anti-Christ," "Without a bea one is not admitted to Heaven," "He who tak snuff is brother to the dogs," and "Potatoes cursed, tea is twice cursed, and coffee is thri cursed." Only in a part of the world which timber is scarce could men have invent such a proverb as "With timber even a pars is a thief."

On the whole, however, the most interesti Russian proverbs are those that have th parallels in other countries. "To run away not glorious, but very healthy" is merely honester version of the English:—

He who fights and runs away
Will live to fight another day

And in Russia, as in other countries, t proverbs frequently contradict each othe Hence, beside the runaway's proverb, we ha the hero's proverb: "There is not even a wo in Russian for pardon"—meaning that Russian asks for quarter.

I doubt, indeed, whether it would be possibl to form a coherent picture of the mind and so of any nation from its proverbs. Caution the theme of one proverb, courage of anothe Content and discontent are equally praise Cynicism flourishes by the side of pie Worldly wisdom and divine wisdom cancel ea other out. Proverbs are as various as th human beings who quote them, and we loo in them in vain for any general ethical principl Thus: "There is no rope strong enough hang the truth" is a noble proverb whi Mr. Guershoon quotes on the same page the far from edifying: "If you have no trump use your fist." It was a moralist who compos the sentence: "The devil pours a spoonf of honey into some one else's wife"; but was no Puritan who summed up his philosoph in the epigram: "Drink and you die, drin not and you still die, so it is better to drink "Live simply, and you will live a hundre years" is a proverb of rosy optimism. "Li a hundred years, learn a hundred years, and y still die a fool" contains, on the other hand, th essence of a pessimist's experience of lif Marriage is looked at askance in the proverb "If you go to war, pray; if you travel overse pray twice; if you are about to get marrie pray thrice," and a wife-beating peasant philosophy is expressed in: "A wife is not pot, she will not break so easily"; but how th Darby-and-Joan view of life shines through th saying: "Do not wish for any other blessin than a good wife and rich cabbage soup!"

It is local colour rather than a particul kind of national wisdom that we find in most these Russian proverbs. Thus, "It is easi to bear a child every year than to shave ever day" is not the saying of a national sage, b is merely a Russian soldier's grumble—th grumble, probably, of a soldier who had to sha with ice-cold water. There is local colour, agai in "One dances much better when looking beer," and in: "When roubles fall from heave there is no sack: when there is a sack, roubl do not fall."

Mr. Guershoon's book is rich in such loc colour, and his analysis and display of Russia proverbs provide enjoyable reading. How f these proverbs mirror the moods and fanci of modern Russia it is impossible for a far- islander to say. Many of the aphorisms—f example: "Even in another world we sh have to serve the gentry, for they will be in t cauldrons and we shall have to stoke the fires" revolutionary though this is in its humour—we the products of an age of serfdom, and have l their relevance to modern life; and it may that in these strenuous days of Stakhanovi Russians no longer say to each other: "T

Russian is strong on three foundations: 'perhaps,' 'never mind,' and 'somehow.'" Probably, too, no patriotic Russian would now quote the bitter proverb: "Great is Holy Russia, but for truth there is no room anywhere in it." Such proverbs belong to darker ages. Even "To live is either to beat or to be beaten" is a proverb unworthy of an equalitarian world. But the proverbs touching on common life still, no doubt, survive, such as the excellent: "He who is born lucky owns a cockerel laying eggs and a bull giving milk." But not, I hope, "Live and scratch yourself; when you die you will not itch any more."

"One does not dispute a proverb," says a Russian proverb. For myself, I dispute hundreds belonging to all nations between the Shannon and the Ural Mountains. Y. Y.

BOMB IN THE PARLOUR

MINISTRY Officials came impressively to our county last week and, as we all sat at a long table, told us that the number of evacuees we had had up to now was just nothing to the number we might soon expect. This formidable visitation was made only a few days after Cabinet Ministers had told urban civil defence workers to assume that the blitz would be resumed, so we are taking the intimation fairly seriously. Like the rest of us, I count my lists again, wondering by what arguments such or such a big house or parsonage could be induced to abandon neutrality, or how those very Ministry officials could be persuaded to let us have the things we need if we are to do the work they ask us to do.

But there is another aspect of evacuation which doesn't interest my co-workers, but which interests me very much indeed; that is the effect of evacuation on the women's vote.

Most people who know the present-day Army, Navy and Air Force think that voters there have become more progressive and that barriers that have often prevented working-class solidarity in the past have lately become less rigid. They believe that the consequence of shared work and enforced association has been a move towards political consciousness and democracy. But has the almost equally enforced throwing together of women had the same effect?

The first thing, in trying to arrive at an answer, is to realise that women from different working-class strata have associated in quite different circumstances.

Skilled and unskilled men have met on neutral ground—barrack room and barrack square—if one has found his standard of life raised and the other has found his lowered, the levelling has not involved any personal possessions, not so much as a pair of boots. All surroundings have been to each uniformly neutral and alien.

But women from different sections have met in a house, in the very centre of possessive emotion, and the well-being of those dearest to each party has usually been involved.

Take a single instance. Mrs. X is a farmer's wife equally noted for her kindness and her slipshod ways. To her flagged kitchen and her flock beds came two little evacuees from the upper section of the urban working class. The midden, the fowls and sheepdogs which raided the back kitchen, the outside sanitation did not long trouble the children. They supposed, I dare say, that farms are all like that and a good thing, too—anyhow Mrs. X's sweet temper made up for everything. But when the mothers came down to visit they were horrified. They saw the higher standard of cleanliness and standard of living for which they had made such sacrifices being dragged down in the precious persons of their children. These children, like most of the others whom a hospitable village had willingly received, were ultimately taken away. We were hurt and felt that all our work had been for nothing.

Time passed and the fresh wave of evacuation of last winter reached us. This time the evacuees were the children of Irish dockers. Out of eight children sent to my house seven had dirty heads and few who came had adequate clothing. Mrs. X, as usual willing, took in two, but this time it was her turn to be horrified: The language, the roughness, the general uncivilised ways of her new charges appalled her. Their standard of life was as much below hers as that of the first lot had been above it.

Now Mrs. X is too kind to hate anybody, but as everyone knows, many housewives feel extremely bitter about the ways of people who, in their opinion, have not even troubled to "housetrain" their children. A decent standard of living, a clean and orderly house, is an achievement on the average working-class wage, chaos (hugger-mugger and dirty ways) is a perpetual menace. The hostility of many a decent housewife towards having shiftless people in her house is a hostility ultimately based on a real and far from groundless fear of being dragged down, too.

For remember that the blankets and mattresses on her beds, her sheets and towels, the china on her dresser, even the polish on her furniture are the tools with which a woman builds that indefinable but vital thing, "a comfortable home." To expect her to see her tools misused without emotion is like expecting a carpenter to see a stranger working at his bench and using his chisels as screwdrivers without protest; moreover, a housewife's work is done to ensure the well-being of her own family and her reward is their welfare and love. The provocation is enormous. Affection, possessiveness, all sorts of instincts good and bad come in. I know this from my own experience. Used to hospital work, I confess that some months ago when I found body-lice in *my* blankets, and liable to infect *my* family I felt revolted and had to summon all my convictions in order not to get rid of the infected child, a course which would have humiliated her bitterly.

In spite of the difficulties it is clearly vital, if we want a better world after the war, that we should do everything we can to prevent any further splitting. The interests of different sections of the working class are the same, and we must, if we can, prevent a reactionary women's vote being used to offset a progressive men's vote. We housewives have a political duty. We must try to persuade ourselves and each other to hate the louse and not the lousy, to blame (in Ruskin's phrase) "the unteaching and not the untaught."

Those who want the old order back will undoubtedly use all the symptoms of antagonism; they are already well aware of this particular rift. Look at the advertisement pages of any paper with a "popular" circulation. Workers of the world are urged to observe that someone doesn't yet use such and such proprietary soap powder, the housewife is urged to be wretched unless lino is spotless and washed-up dishes are without a smear. They know where to get us! Who can doubt that the big combines will, at need, also know how to use their excellent market research machinery for political purposes?

Thus those of us on the other side who have a political sense, must do their best, in the midst of other tasks, to emphasise what we believe. That is: that, broadly speaking, the "underprivileged" are as they are, for quite simple and obvious reasons: bad housing, economic insecurity, a shoddy education, poor food, poor clothes, a monotonous one-track life; we must reiterate that such bad conditions will usually have exactly the effects we see and deplore. Those who have been subjected to bad conditions and who have remained decent, intelligent and self-respecting are so because, thank goodness, many human beings are better than anyone has a right to expect.

If we feel impatience or lack of sympathy with our evacuees, if parents with evacuated children resent the poorness of the homes into which some of their children have been tumbled, let us turn that impatience upon the old and abominable social conditions that have brought these things about, let us turn that resentment and lack of sympathy upon the successive generations of our rulers.

AMABEL WILLIAMS-ELLIS

THE MOVIES

"Hold Back the Dawn," at the Carlton
"Tall, Dark and Handsome," at the Regal.
"Love Crazy," at the Empire.
"Peace—By Adolf Hitler," March of Time.

The flashback is a device with which Hollywood has been playing for some time. The results up to date haven't been impressive, yet anyone who saw the last Ginger Rogers film, in which present and past intermingled, with the chief character as narrator, must have realised that here was a method capable of development. Too much style went out of films with the arrival of the talkies, and this was one means of getting a little of it back. True, narrator and episode in *Kitty Foyle* proved rather tedious, but that was the fault of direction; the same method is used in *Hold Back the Dawn* with brilliant effect. Story: a shady Roumanian (Charles Boyer) arriving in a Mexican border town and trying to enter the United States; marriage with simple American school-teacher (Olivia de Havilland) to acquire citizenship; complications with mistress and old accomplice (Paulette Goddard); dawn of love, so that crook ends by having both the wife and the country of his choice. This doesn't sound a very original or a very subtle tale; but see how the flashback helps. For the story is told by Boyer to a film director after most of it has happened, and we get the benefit of all those inflexions of irony and later knowledge belonging to personal narrative. Only from time to time does the voice recur like the beginning of a chapter and to guide us by its tones as the man who is telling his story remembers. It is remarkable how this device, very sparely used, pulls the story together and gives it both excitement and a unity it might otherwise lack. The greatest credit must go to the director, Mitchell Leisen, for the touch of style, the skill with which he has framed his story without immobilising it. Boyer gives the performance of his career; his fascination for women was never more convincing than here, in the shadiest of his roles. And the background of the little Mexican town—with its *fiestas* and bull-fights; its gates opening to let tourists pop in and closed against refugees who want to slip out; its immigrant officer, cafés, colonnades and main square in the sun—is splendidly realised. There is one hotel, ironically named the Esperanza, which we get to know in every cranny of its shabby and queerly derelict living; and the view widens to an empty coast line and to a nearby village where there is a marriage festival in progress. All this, fascinating in itself, is coloured by sentiment and irony to a degree which would be impossible without the flashback method: events are present as we watch them taking shape, and yet they have the inevitability of the past. I strongly recommend *Hold Back the Dawn.*

"Who's in this ice-box?" whispers one top-hatted mourner to another, as they stagger under the coffin leaving the church; and it certainly is a question, because they'd taken the dead man for a ride and let him escape, and here they are carrying him to the cemetery. For that matter, they'd been dead themselves till a few weeks ago, having been bumped off by a boss who made a name by his shootings, but kept his "victims" alive in a cage. Then there are butlers from whose pockets a gun drops out when they stoop to lift the tea-tray, and gorillas enjoying their little fling, and parties given by the tsar of the south side and attended by the mogul of the north, and messages of lead and Leonardo da Vinci cigars and flowers and stiffs, and a Christmas-tree such as you'd never come across except in an old-fashioned killer's home. Yes, we are back among the gangsters, and this is a slighter case of murder. *Tall, Dark and Handsome*, presenting a wonderful glossy lizard in Mr. Cesar Romero, almost recaptures the heyday; but handsome is as handsome does. This expert begins very well by fixing an alibi in a department store with gifts of lingerie to the sales-girl. Better and better, he falls for another girl in the store's nursery, engages her as nursemaid to his children, and then goes out to find the children for her to look after. His henchmen bring back the toughest little guy in town. We are set up for the crispest adventures. But then comes the revelation that our hero doesn't kill his corpses after all, and though it's still

funny, the window has been opened to sentiment. He's really a clean guy, this brilliantino with the flashing molars; and we are expected to watch him through a rainbow of tears as he goes off on his honeymoon. It's a bit too much. And all the film needed was the least twist: the gangster should have been made *ashamed* of his eccentricity of not killing, his girl should have comforted him, and then *Tall, Dark and Handsome* would have been up to Runyon standards. As it is, it's gay and artificial, but just falls short.

Love Crazy gets plenty of laughs, but it is Powell and Loy at their (very expert) second-best. The Thin Man could do with a good fat script. Here he celebrates his marriage anniversary and gets trapped in a lift with an old flame. Very funny scenes to begin with, but slippery mats and mothers-in-law are followed by antics in a looney-bin; and it hardly suits William Powell to persuade us that chestnuts are best. The old partnership retains a little of its airy charm. Best seen after dinner.

The March of Time has made a film of Hitler's broken pledges. From Rhineland occupied to Russia invaded, the speech-maker blows hot and cold, promises give way to guns, and the threat to the Americas is made real by Hitler's assurance that it is as likely as a landing on the moon. The Führer's voice is simulated in barking, broken English. This even steals a little thunder from the March of Time's own Voice. But couldn't they retire that Voice, which has drilled us through some of the best documentaries of our time, or is it as immovable as Popeye's? Oh, for the cooing of the dove! WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, September 20th—
- Trafalgar Square Demonstration: "Equal Compensation for War Injury for Men and Women," 2.
- Labour Research Department Conference: "What's Holding Up Production?" Central Hall, 2.30–6.30.
- Garden Party in Aid of China, including Tennis Exhibition, Aubrey House, Campden Hill Road, 2.30. Adm. 5s.
- International Brigade Assoc. Concert Meeting. Cambridge Theatre, 3.

SUNDAY, September 21st—
- Louis Kentner and L.S.O., conducted by Charles Brill, Cambridge Theatre, 3.
- Army Welfare Concert, Royal Albert Hall, 3.

MONDAY, September 22nd—
- Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch. David Freeman: "Singapore and the Far East," 12 Gt. Newport Street, 1.
- C. E. M. Joad: "Some Problems of Philosophy," Morley College, 6. First of 24 Extension Lectures.

TUESDAY, September 23rd—
- Dr. R. H. Thouless: "The Cambridge Evacuation Survey," Housing Centre, 1.
- Dr. H. Morgan: "Industrial Health," 13 Suffolk Street, S.W.1, 6.

WEDNESDAY, September 24th—
- Eugenics Society Luncheon, François Lafitte: "Some Eugenic Aspects of Family Allowances," Pinoli's, 17 Wardour Street, W.1, 1.
- Lunch Time Concert, Beethoven and Schumann Programme, Bloomsbury House, 1.15.

FRIDAY, September 26th—
- N. B. L. Pevsner, First of 6 Lectures on "The English House," Birkbeck College, 5.30.
- Mme. Ambrosova: "Karel Capek and His Contemporaries," 22 St. Petersburgh Place, W.2, 7.
- Dr. Paul Neumann: "Democracy," Mary Ward Settlement, 7.

Correspondence

ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

SIR,—Having just returned from a fairly long stay in the United States, may I offer one or two remarks on Anglo-American relations?

1. Our propaganda, though improved (especially the radio side) is still bad. It is no good appealing to the Americans to be chivalrous and not much better to ask them to be selfish. What we have got to get across to the American people is that their democracy (though perhaps not their national independence—the distinction is important) will be immediately threatened from within if Hitler wins, that in a world in which Nazi Germany and the United States were the only two great powers America would become a semi-Fascist, militarist state permanently. In order to bring home this argument we have, of course, ourselves got to show the Americans that we know what democracy means.

2. There are two major arguments of the isolationists. The first is that the U.S. is not in any real military danger (since this is difficult to disprove with any authority the most effective answer is that the danger, if not military, is political); the second that the British Government can't be trusted to fight for democracy. The second argument has come chiefly, though not only, from the Left, and this particular moment—when by the attack on Russia the Left is more united and less isolationist than it has been in two years—is the time to answer it. But it won't be answered by propaganda apparently designed only for the upper classes. It is no earthly use to appeal to Col. Lindbergh and the handful of Americans who are conscious appeasers and prefer to turn America Fascist rather than risk the spread of Socialism in either hemispheres. Neither will it be answered by Sir Walter Citrine. If we are to appeal to the American people to make complete common cause to defend democracy from Hitler we have got to show them that democracy is no abstract principle.

3. We should send *immediately* to America British speakers who will not confine themselves to women's clubs, the snobbish "Bundles for Britain" circles and the big-business hierarchy. We should send militant trade unionists to mix with the militant members of the C.I.O. (over 5 million strong). We should send representatives of the youth and student movements who can speak to organisations like the American Youth Congress (4 million affiliates) in their own language. We should send men who fought in Spain, men and women who organised the Peace Ballot of 1935 to tell the American people in progressive and human terms exactly why we need their co-operation. For we should understand without illusions that only mass pressure from the American people can defeat the very powerful and reactionary appeasers in their own country and that it is our job to try to help the progressive American organisations to increase that mass pressure (the pressure that won the advances of the New Deal) all we can. ARNOLD KETTLE

489 Finchley Road, N.W.3.

EDUCATION IN THE U.S.S.R.

SIR,—Critic asks in his London Diary what is the official Russian explanation for charging fees for education beyond the primary school. The decrees of October 3rd, 1940, institute measures for obtaining a regular supply of technical workers and preventing them from "flitting." One form of education, the non-technical, is discouraged by charging fees in the higher classes and the limitation of stipends to students who excel, while industrial conscription is introduced for a proportion of young people to attend another form of education, the technical school. The choice of the conscripted is the duty of collective farm chairmen and town Soviets. There is an obligation to work thereafter for four years in the trade learnt, with temporary exemption from military and naval service. These decrees show the pressure for maintaining the supply of technical workers, and suggest the existence of a growing preference for literary education. They are to be read along with another group of recent measures: the eight-hour working day, the seven-day week and the penalisation of flitting (June–July, 1940), and are probably related to preparations for defence. JOHN MAYNARD

18 Gilston Road, S.W.10.

THE FUTURE OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SIR,—Your correspondence on our educational system has revealed yet once again that most Progressives have little to contribute save general principles. Few have detailed suggestions for a practicable scheme of reform—and they are in hopeless disagreement.

This is particularly true with reference to the Public Schools, and particularly regrettable because rapid developments now present an opportunity unique in our history and unlikely to recur. Many factors, of which the stiffened income tax is but one, are combining to reduce the number of children whose parents can afford to send them to (in some cases even to keep them at) a Public School. Headmasters are consequently bidding for pupils by devices ranging from intensive (though, of course, indirect) advertising to competitive cutting of fees. Last term, e.g., one head endeavoured to entice a boy from my school by offering to take him plus a brother still at home for a single fee! Some schools are already seeking assistance by grants from various sources; some have turned to the local education authorities, and more will do so, although grants from this quarter usually carry the obligation to award a number of free places, and sometimes the necessity of admitting some measure of public control. As the financial position continues to worsen, it will become possible to secure a considerable number of free places and further increases of public control. (This does not apply to all Public Schools, of course. Some will weather the financial storm, and some will go down altogether, as the heads of two of them have recently stated, rather than become *public* schools.)

Now what do Socialists desire? Is it preferable that many Public Schools shall be allowed to collapse, or shall they be preserved by grants of public money to provide a free education for selected children from elementary schools? As the knowledge of the dilemma confronting these Schools percolates among reformers, many of them hail it gladly as a golden opportunity to be seized eagerly; they hope to "democratise" the Public Schools.

But note the consequences. Children are sent to these schools neither to avoid propaganda, as Mr. Bruce Lockhart breathtakingly suggested, nor yet mainly from snobbery, as other correspondents maintained. The most weighty consideration is that they are the avenues to nearly every position of wealth and influence. Their closed scholarships to the University, their intensive preparation for the open scholarships, their social contacts, the widespread practice of restricting to ex-Public Schoolboys the most enviable positions in commerce, finance, the Foreign Office, etc.—*these* are the solid advantages for which parents pay, sometimes with painful effort, from £120 to £350 per annum for each child.

What, then, would be the consequences of the proposed "democratisation" of our Public Schools? Nothing less than to give a new lease of life to social and economic inequality. We should eliminate some of the grosser inefficiencies of plutocracy and approximate to the Napoleonic *carrière ouverte aux talents*. We should cream off the intelligence of the working and lower middle classes, enabling a few children to secure the "plums" hitherto beyond their reach. This would act as a powerful solvent of that class-solidarity which develops among the unprivileged as social stratification becomes more rigid. The natural leaders of the workers would enter the élite of an increasingly bureaucratic society, and social inequality based on wealth would be superseded by social inequality based on natural ability. Society would thereby be rendered more efficient, but not more just.

My conclusion is that the true line of progress is not to capture an increased number of free places in the Public Schools for a fortunate minority of poorer children. Dominance in a class-society by a highly-trained bureaucracy selected according to ability regardless of class is a Nazi ideal and not a Socialist. The fundamental problem for educationists remains "Education for what?" and education for the best-paid jobs is as anti-Socialist when given to the brightest children of the workers as when given to the unselected offspring of the wealthier. So long as (*a*) the present social and economic inequality are tolerated, and (*b*) the total accommodation of our boarding schools is so small that the great majority of children could never attend one even were fees abolished entirely—so long shall we have an educational system which is a function and a buttress of an anti-Socialist order.

The true line of progress is a great extension of boarding and day schools for all children up to 18, giving an education both wide and varied, with schools in each area concentrating in the upper forms on commercial, technical, and more "academic" studies according to the nature of the district, the needs of the nation, and the capacities of the children. Our aim should be not to keep some children out of the existing Public

Schools and put others in, but to democratise our whole system by a vigorous application of the motto "Education for all." When every lower-middle or working-class child can have a free education up to the age of 18, with a good prospect of gaining open University scholarships (and also, if necessary, closed scholarships such as those now offered by certain County Councils), the present Public Schools will lose their attractiveness. Most of them will have to choose between bankruptcy and voluntary incorporation into the system of the new public schools. That will raise further problems, such as the maintenance of reasonable freedom and flexibility of organisation against rigidity and red tape—but these are not insoluble. And open competition for the posts at present reserved to the middle classes will go far towards destroying the social and economic privilege which they carry at present.

Where is the money coming from? After the war there will be camps, hutments, "de-requisitioned" country houses and estates to smooth the path *materially*—the accommodation will be there. Habits of communal living and feeding, and the prolonged absence of evacuee children from their homes, will also have helped to prepare the way *psychologically*. Grants for children of men in the Forces, and billeting grants for evacuees will have made such a scheme as I suggest less of a shock *financially*. The urgent need is for all Socialists and all educational reformers to popularise the idea, work out the details, and organise the demand. Not "The same education for different children," but "More and better education for all" is the slogan for democrats to-day. Not "Capture the Public Schools" (many of which will refuse to be "captured" anyway, thus intensifying their advantages as their number decreases), but "By-pass and so freeze out the aristo-plutocratic Public Schools by building up a great system of democratically-inspired public schools."

81 Arcadian Gardens, N.22. C. A. SMITH

DUAL CAPACITY

SIR,—I am interested in your article "Dual Capacity" in the issue of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION dated September 6th, particularly as I have been in a very good position for the last two years to observe these public servants at work. While it must be admitted that it is a vicious system to vest the control of an industry in the hands of a private individual with an axe to grind, it would appear that this is no time to seek to alter the system.

In your article you have given one or two pointers which enable the disease to be very accurately diagnosed. You say (*a*) that these controllers are paid by their own firms a very much higher salary than the Government would give to any civil servant, and you say (*b*) that a Government factory was recently handed over to private control under the firm of Wm. Beardmore & Co. Ltd.

If you care to scrutinise the advertisement columns of the engineering papers, such as *Engineering* or *The Engineer*, under the heading of Situations Vacant, you will find that wherever the Government advertise for technical experts to become wholetime civil servants, the salaries they offer are laughable when correlated with the qualifications that applicants are called on to possess.

It appears certain that nobody with any strong individuality or any belief in his own powers would apply for these jobs. They are left to the spineless and the supine, people who want to play for safety, who will never take a chance. And it would not be remarkable if an enterprise staffed with this kind of material were to fail under stress of war and have to be handed over to private enterprise.

If the civil service is to be capable of taking control of all war production in time of war, it must prepare for this in time of peace. It should not recruit all its servants as boys with a miserable financial reward, it should be prepared to co-opt men from the top of the tree, who had proved their capacity, and it must be prepared to pay them what they are worth. With a nucleus of such experts in the Government service, it might be able to take the control of industry that your article advocates. The only step that is now practicable in the stress of war is to pay the controllers that we have co-opted from private industry the salaries that their firms consider them worth—from the public purse; and to try still further to minimise their bias by putting them, wherever possible, in control of industries outside their peacetime orbit. R. WADDELL

169 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge.

PHEASANTS IN THE CORN

SIR,—I was amazed, and not a little dismayed, to read that estates exist where during a period of peril farmers still quake under the laws of frightened tenancy to such an extent that they are scared to shoot pheasants and any other pests that attack and devour corn that is so badly needed by the nation. Surely such feudal mystic rights and terrorism should have long since died the death that it so richly deserves. But as a gamekeeper I for one cannot really think that anyone owning a shoot, however well stocked, would dare risk a run in with the Ministry of Agriculture—and make no error, the estate owner who sees fit to go so far as to put his pheasants before corn will be dealt with in the right manner by the Minister of Agriculture—but for the moment that's by the way, and here I am going willingly, nay gladly, to incur the wrath of a host of hoary-headed head gamekeepers (I'm, by the way, a head keeper myself), who have bent the knee and pulled the forelock in abject obeisance of some autocratic employers, by stating that any shoot, large or small, who allows its pheasants or the like to stray on to corn and do damage thereto would do well to look into the general activities of its keepering department. I say very definitely that they and they alone are to blame. A good keeper will see to it that his birds give no cause to bring any sort of grievance to his tenant farmers. Should the said keeper or keepers fail in this indeed most important point of their duty, then the farmer has every right in the world to shoot those birds. The blame lies not with the farmer but with the keeper. On the other hand, there still is the law of compensation where such damage has occurred.

I simply cannot believe that any farmer of to-day would stand for such treatment as regards game; and as for being penalised as to repairs to property for disturbing nearby covers, then all I've got to say is that the sooner such owners of estates are brought to book, the better will it be for all concerned. I am very much afraid that if such conditions do exist, then a lot of trouble will be brewed in and around such districts when hostilities cease.

At the same time, I realise that there are districts where game is still thought quite a lot of. Foxes, too, come into quite a bit of religion of their species in various places; and as well do I know of districts where even now the death of a fox, except by the jaws of a pack of bawling hounds, is spoken of after dark and in bated breath.

But when I read, at such times as this, that a farmer still has to respect game, then I feel not a little shame for my profession, and at the same time I fully realise what I am up against making any adverse statement against the lordly pheasant, but for God's sake and the smashing of Nazism, do let the country know that the day of the feudal overlord is long passed. Mind you, Sir, I could relate, and with all truth and relish, tales of places where eviction was the order of the day should game be taken by others than the gilded few. As a matter of fact, I once had, while in Sussex, the unpleasant suggestion that I should take part in such an activity, You may rest assured that I refused in a most forcible manner to take part in this action. On another occasion, in this fair land, I knew of a man with quite a decent-sized family who was not only discharged for catching a hare which had sadly depleted much of his garden, but was in a large way barred from getting another job for many miles around.

Now a few words as to pigeons. These birds definitely come into the class of destructive vermin, almost on a par with a rat, and they can be destroyed where and how the farmer likes. There is no law in the wide world to stop it; but should it come to your notice that any keeper goes out of his way to give these birds the right of way, then you will be doing a great service to agriculture in general by printing his full address.

It makes a good thinking sportsman really ill to know that such accusations may well become general upon their shoulders, and many, many of those shoulders do not deserve such an unfair burden, but we all know the old saying, "Give a dog a bad name and hang him." C. W. BALCHIN

"END OF ECONOMIC PARENTHOOD"

SIR,—When Mr. Whitworth pointed out in his letter in your issue of September 6th that "the only permanent incentive to a civilised community to produce itself, would seem to be an innate regard for, and delight in, family life" he was only stating half the truth. For much can be done both to make a community realise it has a social responsibility for its continuance, and to make it economically less difficult to have children. What is necessary therefore is that any propaganda for a higher birth-rate should work in *both* these directions, and that any psychological appeal based upon social needs should be accompanied by the means to make this appeal effective. Each *by itself* is likely to be barren.

It is, of course, true as Mr. Whitworth points out that a small birth-rate exists among our more prosperous classes, and that here there is room for an appeal based on social grounds. What he forgets, however, is that at any economic level a married couple, when considering whether they can afford a family, do not compare their standard of living with those of a lower grade, but with those of their own grade without a family.

If, then, we are to encourage the birth-rate in any western community, some form of increased financial assistance such as family allowances, free education or reduced taxation must be given, such allowances to be based on the needs of a child at different economic levels.

It is not suggested that the State should discriminate between children according to the income of their parents; but that over and above a State scheme of family allowances could be superimposed compulsory mutual insurance schemes for persons in higher economic grades, which together with the flat-rate State contribution would be of real assistance or even cover the costs of a child in that grade. EVA M. HUBBACK
Vice-Chairman

The Family Endowment Society,
19 Wellgarth Road, N.W.11.

ALLIED CONSCRIPTION

SIR,—If the picture drawn by your correspondent is correct (which I have no reasons to doubt), the position of the Polish Jews anxious to fight the Nazism is highly deplorable and some practical steps should be taken without delay to put things right. At the same time, I wish to describe the plight of the "stateless Russians," who are unable to join up in the British Army or in the forces of their "old country," from which they have been exiled.

At the time of writing the Germans, whom my father fought in the Great War, bombard the city where my mother lives (U.S.S.R), while I, an able-bodied man, am doing odd jobs until the Ministry of Labour finds some use for me as a language expert. B. H.

BOOKS FOR THE FORCES

SIR,—I have been asked to form a recreational library for Air Crew under training, and I wondered whether some of your readers might like to help by contributions in kind. If five hundred would sacrifice five books each from their libraries, I should have a very good start. Books serious or light, but in good condition and no junk. I should be extremely grateful for any contributions sent to the address below. T. C. WORSLEY, P/O

44 Bourne Street, S.W.1.

THE VILLAGE EGG

SIR,—I know it is silly, but I cannot resist having my little say about the "Village Egg." I read the original article and thought it so excellent and so *real* that I sent it to a friend and cannot refer to it.

I am not "infuriated," as Mr. West says, and if by going without an egg a week can win the war, I will gladly go without eggs for a year.

But when I am suddenly told by the farmer's wife, who has served me with my modest quota of eggs for years, that she can no longer supply me, but that I must take a journey of 10 miles (five there and five back) in a bus, which more often than not rushes past, having no room for another passenger, and when at last I succeed in getting to town to find "we have no eggs," and when this is repeated so that since the scheme—as I cannot take the journey too often at my age—I have had *two* small Canadian eggs, is it a wonder that I begin to wonder whether this excellent scheme by which everybody is to have an egg is working so very well after all.

Again, the subsidy is a temptation to the small poultry-keeper to rush off and become a commercial dealer, so there we are, eggs to the right of us, eggs to the left of us, but none to eat.

Bentham, KATE RACKHAM
Near Cheltenham.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

A TASTE for the literature of the sea is something, I suspect, which a very large number of readers acquire slowly. It is a difficult literature; so much of it is written in an incomprehensible dialect. Early in childhood we come upon words like windward and leeward, bows and stern, starboard and port, only to lose them in the struggle with a new lot, like poop, foretop, binnacle, trunnion and bowline; and the list gets longer and longer. Either you have the kind of mind which can pause in the middle of the hottest actions by Marryat, Melville, Kingston, Conrad and McFee, to look up a book of nautical terms, or you have not. And if you do not look them up the literature of the sea gradually becomes—well not exactly bilge, but at any rate Greek. It was one of the defects of my education that no schoolmaster ever realised his class was suffering far keener humiliations about the meaning of nautical terms in the sea stories they were reading than were ever suffered on account of an irregular verb in French or German. We had to guess what happened when a frigate luffed or yawed; and those flying jibs and foretop gallants, which play so large a part in English literature of the sea, were never explained to us. Yet the whole body and spirit of the sea-going life is technique and technique again.

From a social point of view this ignorance is lamentable. The literature of the sea is the supremely moral literature. More than any other it inculcates the ideas of authority and order. Beside the sailor the landsman is an anarchist. Even those novelists who have treated the sailor as a psychological subject, as Conrad did, or as a being prone to frenzies and superstitions such as we meet in the work of James Hanley—in my opinion our best living writer on the sea—cannot escape the moral stamp which necessity prints deeply on the sailor's life. The sailor illustrates the old paradox that those who are bound by the most severe communal ties, and who are obliged to reckon with a hostile environment, are often freer and easier-natured than those who are able to devote themselves to freedom. Discipline and order are the makers of human dignity, which, left to stand by itself, will degenerate unless a man is dominated by one of the nobler passions. I do not mean by this to idealise life at sea, for, as the glum or tortured characters of James Hanley's books show, a price is paid and not all can pay it; but there is a striking vocational Virtue in that life, like the *virtu* of the doctors, the soldiers, or nowadays of the citizen in modern war. The point was made by Mr. Richard Hughes's *In Hazard*.

> I mean the *raison d'être* of (the sea-going profession) is economic, and yet the practice of it is judged by standards which are not economic at all and which can only be called moral. . . The working of a ship calls for certain qualities—virtues, if you like—which do not seem to be appropriate to-day to the relations of employers and employed on shore. . . . The seamen come to expect almost as high a standard of conduct from the Owners as from each other. Every act of the Owners will be judged by the whole fleet, and vigorously judged. Nor will the verdict be hidden, for expediency. If an Owner's Virtue (again in the Roman sense) is found lacking, his officers may be so ashamed as to want to hide their heads; but they will not pretend they have not noticed the fault.

My own taste for books about the sea was half-hearted until I took my first lesson in the grammar of sailing on the lake in Regent's Park. I continued the course elsewhere, but unfortunately I was terrified of water; still I had learned enough to understand the fine points of the dilemma of Marryat's *Diomede*, for example, when that frigate was fighting to get off a lee shore in a gale on the coast of France and the captain had to club-haul her. The incident comes in the early pages of *Peter Simple*. And I could follow with my mind's eye the nautical complications of the naval skirmish in the Toulon roads which comes later in that book. A talk on small boat sailing, even a theoretical one, should be part of every course in English literature. It is a sign of Marryat's general gifts as a novelist that you can read him happily without this knowledge, but so few writers have his capacity for technical narrative that it is a pity to miss him at his most lively and ingenious. Among the novelists of the sea he is the best-natured. "Free and easy, bright and breezy," he livens one like a firm, dry and sportive breeze; and his people have not that monotonous courage of the school who assume (quite wrongly) that you have the perpetual pluck, adventurousness and daring of the wooden-headed heroes. Marryat was not a simple person, he was not cut all of a piece, and his characters benefit by his eye for the contrary in human nature. And, under the law of the sea, this eye was a comic one. You can read books like *Midshipman Easy* and *Peter Simple* to-day as easily as you can read the best Wodehouse; only Marryat is better fun. His jokes do not date; his habits of pulling the legs of his heroes and of leading the reader up the garden are the best perennial chaffing; and if his stories, like the mass of picaresque literature, have no inner development, so that you pass merely from episode to episode and only give up because one can have enough even of liveliness, there is no dead wood in them. An ingenious friend has, incidentally, pointed out that these midshipmen of Marryat's, with their delicious, youthful conceit of themselves, are really nautical characters who turn up for a page or two in Jane Austen's novels. Marryat is giving the masculine side of that feminine picture and with a larger irony.

In his books and in his life Marryat is the complete sailor and certainly the complete naval officer. With the country house he can't afford, the farm that does not pay; with his enquiring eye, his enthusiastic mind, his alternations of easy temper with roars of rage, and that true sailor's innocence about the land which so easily turns to persecution mania and suspicion of everybody, Marryat is a prototype. He worked fabulously hard—three of his best novels were done in one year—and though he was enormously well-paid he screamed like a German that he had been swindled by his publishers. He brought the sunny verve and apoplectic furore of the quarter deck to his family life and his desk. The novels have a more equable temper and an engaging philosophic wit. There is a bee in every sailor's bonnet: Marryat's was the press gang, and of course he hammered at it politically. Otherwise his books cut swiftly, cleanly and smoothly along, and the dry, silk-tearing sound of water as it chuckles past the bows of a boat on a keen tack seems to have got into his prose. He has the nonchalance and cockiness of his kind, and they find a happy outlet in the sublime contrariness of young Mr. Easy and the virtuous gullibility of Mr. Simple. Simple they both are and prigs but for the grace of youth. Lieutenants wilt and Captains give up when they are faced by this pair who are always to be found on the borderland of impertinence and innocence. And neither of these young puppies remains a puppy; they grow up to be quite personable young dogs. The puppyhood is thrashed out of them, though not with wanton brutality. They are turned into gentlemen, and a gentleman, according to Marryat, is a kind of philosopher who flies into rages (which he does not feel) when duty or necessity requires them, and controls his feelings when the common herd are indulging themselves and letting fly.

This mild ambition is refreshing after a decade of tough literature where the hero is so tough when he starts that the author can do no more and is obliged to show him going soggier and soggier. Marryat's greenhorns who know none of the answers, who are afraid of shedding blood and who admit a dislike for gales and cannon balls when they first meet them, are not only truer to youth but harden off more pleasantly than the tough, when they get older.

Philosophy is a strong preoccupation with Marryat. After all, in his time, we were fighting the philosophers. Somehow we had got to knock sense into them. There was the wealthy Mr. Easy senior, for example, who believed in Dartington or Neill, liberty, equality and fraternity, the redistribution of goods. Marryat has a good deal of fun with this comfortable, speculative liberal who, put into the dilemma of having to choose between sacrificing his principles and his son, "does the natural thing," i.e. sacrifices his son. The son had imbibed his father's liberal principles too well: he was apt to act on them and filial rebellion puts a strain on any philosopher. Mr. Easy senior had, one suspects, the innocent man's instinct for a good investment. The charm of his son is that like so many of the products of advanced education, he is a difficult character always on the look-out for brick walls to knock his nice and very argumentative head against. There is nothing more pleasing than seeing other people getting the corner knocked off them and the midshipman supplies the spectacle. But they take some knocking off. That cheerful, strong-minded young man has terrific resources. When he has violent proof on his person that neither nature in the form of a bee's nest, nor society, in the form of a posse of gamekeepers, are aware of the rights of man, the midshipman does indeed come to the conclusion that his delightful father's teachings are fallacious. But only on land, not on the sea! On the sea, which belongs to no one, the ideas of the revolution will obviously be applicable! That's a typical Marryat twist: the essence of an ingenious humour, the sign of an expert but never ill-natured comedian.

Life at sea is like family life without the women. The ocean takes their place. This enclosure produces eccentrics, and Marryat's skill in drawing them is in the English tradition. Young Simple and young Easy are eccentrics in the making. Then there is the quaint Mr. Muddle (Philosopher Chips), who had discovered that every event and circumstance in life is repeated after a cycle of 27,672 years—a useful piece of nautical misanthropy which made him entirely indifferent to danger. Gentleman Chucks is another philosopher out of *Peter Simple*, a dandy boatswain whose frilled shirt stuck out "like the back fin of a perch." (Trust Marryat for a phrase.) Chuck's conversational style began in the grand manner but was apt to end abruptly in the vernacular, and Marryat always caught the style of a man. Perhaps that is the secret of his verve as a raconteur; every man has a style of his own, moves like an actor across the world. Marryat, with quick and humorous eye, invariably catches it. The character may be a woman:

> Such a clean run I never saw—so neat, too, in all her rigging—everything so neatly stowed under the hatches—never saw such a fine sweep in the counter and all so trim—no ropes towing overboard. "Well Mr. Simple," I said to myself, "Damn it if her figurehead and bows be finished off by the same builder, she's perfect." So I shot ahead and yawed a little. . . .

Or, again, some Irishman quarrelling with his father, or a gunner in a storm wailing about with maternal concern for his guns. But the cry, the gesture, the manner of a living man, is what Marryat always gets.

V. S. PRITCHETT

ON WRITING IN THE COUNTRY

As the Sun Shines. By HENRY WILLIAMSON. *Faber.* 3s. 6d.

All the pieces contained in this collection of Mr. Williamson's Essays have, I think, already appeared, and on this account it might be supposed, do not deserve review. Nevertheless, Mr. Williamson's progress offers such an irresistible temptation to any writer with an ounce of homily in him that I for one am quite unable to deny myself the pleasure of improving the occasion.

Mr. Williamson is one of the not inconsiderable band of writers (Mr. Adrian Bell and H. W. Freeman are the most distinguished of his colleagues) who, since the last war, have retired to the country in order the better to contribute to literature. Soon after the war we find him living in an *Old Farm House* with a large old-fashioned grandfather clock apparently as his sole companion; a little later, in *The Dream of Fair Women*, published in 1924, he has moved—I am tracing a literary progress—to a half-ruined lime-burner's cottage, his solitude now being relieved by puppies (Billjohn, Izaac Walton and Tatters), kittens, a jay, a magpie, a jackdaw, a gull with a broken wing, and a young otter, where he meditates great works. "Here at last," he said to himself, "was peace, here he would dwell, and work on the book which would alter the entire thought of Europe." Whether the thought-altering book was written I do not know, but meanwhile Nature is sedulously observed. An otter, a stag, a salmon, all come under prolonged scrutiny and serve as occasions for some very pleasant literary pieces. In spite, however, of the animal watching, one cannot avoid the feeling that what chiefly interests Mr. Williamson is not Nature, but himself. In the books of W. H. Hudson, the greatest of Nature writers, Nature is the hero from first to last; in Mr. Williamson's, though the writing is ostensibly about Nature, the hero is Mr. Williamson. He uses Nature as a peg to hang his moralising and metaphysical hats on, or a diving-off board from which to plunge into the seas of introspection. Thus when W. H. Hudson tells us about the habits of a mayfly, the magic of his writing causes us to become absorbed in something with which, except when we are reading Hudson, we have absolutely no concern; but with Mr. Williamson the mayfly is introduced chiefly in order to illustrate an author's change of mood. Mr. Williamson is going to leave the West Country; he is bored, flat and stale; even his trout-fishing is without savour; then he sees the mayfly "coming down to drop her eggs on the water," and immediately "I felt my eyes to be clear again as a child's." Suspicion once aroused in the reader's mind, there are no limits to its spread; he even finds himself wondering whether Mr. Williamson has not chosen Nature as his subject in order that he may better exhibit the beauty of his style. "I do not exaggerate this," he says, writing about the change of mood induced by the mayfly. "It is no literary emotion, no heightening-up afterwards to make a pretty piece of writing." Yet this is precisely what the reader suspects that it is. It is a maxim among architects that one should decorate a construction, but never construct a decoration. I wish I could feel that Mr. Williamson observed it, but in view of passages such as the following on the moon, one feels doubtful:

> The great herald of night changing her blazoned shield, with its battle scars showing so dimly, from *or* to *argent*, as it was carried into the higher solitudes of heaven. Sometimes its ghost rose before the dawn, a pale feather floating upwards and followed by the morning star Eosphoros, the light bringer; at other seasons it sank beyond the wheat plains of the west as the stars commenced their faint tremulous music with the wind in

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deepest space. The seasons had passed with invisible feet across the savannas of infinity.

This no doubt is meant to be beautiful; in fact it is only beauteous, the writing of a man who puts pen to paper not because he knows the right thing to say, but because it seems right to say something. Now Mr. Williamson is, as I said above, a representative of a generation of writers who went into the wilderness of rural England to meditate deeply and write great books and—the truth must be told—the meditations are not deep or the books great, which brings me to my homily.

As readers of his works know, in 1937 Mr. Williamson left the West Country and took a farm in Norfolk, a farm in which for some years he made very heavy weather. An account of his troubles is given in *The Story of a Norfolk Farm* published in January of this year, which is to my mind far and away the best book he has written. It is a good book because it is about real difficulties, real people, and real things—even the slight extract here printed about a fraudulent rat-poisoner is the best in the collection. By the time he had reached the end of it, Mr. Williamson had forgotten about himself altogether and instead of writing beauteously about "the savannas of infinity," is discovering a social consciousness and a social conscience in contemplating the appalling neglect of rural England.

> Rats, weeds, swamps, depressed markets, labourers on the dole, rotten cottages, polluted streams . . . insurance houses getting rid of their land mortgages and investing their millions abroad (but not in the Empire), this was the real England of the period of this story of a Norfolk farm.

Here, then, is the moral. It may have once been true that the recipe for the production of Literature with a large L about Nature with a large N was retirement to the country. It is not true now. It is well enough for the writer to visit the country for a weekend or a walking tour, and much rest and refreshment of the spirit may be absorbed therefrom. But if you are proposing to live in it and wish to avoid frustration, you must work in it at *its* things and concern yourself with *its* problems. Then out of your worries as a farmer it is just possible that you may write the book that was denied to your idleness as a literary man.

C. E. M. JOAD

NEW NOVELS

Ramping Cat. By CHRISTIAN MAWSON. *Cape.* 9s. 6d.

Red Rose. By ETHEL MANNIN. *Jarrolds.* 9s. 6d.

The Man Who Loved Children. By CHRISTINA STEAD. *Peter Davies.* 10s. 6d.

Sapphira and the Slave Girl. By WILLA CATHER. *Cassell.* 7s. 6d.

Ramping Cat is an interesting and lively lark. There are few things more deadly than the standard historical novel which treats the figures of the past as if they were moneyed post-war bourgeois in fancy dress and resolutely reduces their affairs to bed and sofa farce terms; and the news that Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, and Henry VIII, appear in *Ramping Cat* will seem to be bad news. This is, however, far from being a standard historical novel and its main concern is with the political jockeying which led to the fall of Thomas Cromwell and the opposition to Lutheranism. The issues which were involved are important to-day: Cromwell as a young man spent a good deal of time in Italy and studied Machiavelli's *Il Principe* in manuscript, falling wholly under its influence. His activities in England were directed largely towards transforming the Abyssinian character of the political structure into that of a modern state of the most repulsive kind. The absolute head of the largest political unit in the world has said, "There is nothing more delightful than to arrange in detail a trap into which one's enemy will inevitably fall, and then to go to bed," a remark which might have been made by Cromwell. Had Cromwell not been defeated the national structure would probably have hardened in the fifteenth century into a form which would have made the political developments of the following two hundred years impossible. The possible consequences may be seen by looking across the Channel at France which is now paying a sufficiently heavy price for having tried eleven different types of national organisation in 160 years, and at Germany where Lutheranism and trap-setting have produced their ultimate fine flower of human happiness. "The Ass *will* have blows, the people *will* be ruled by force," "The secret 'yes' must for the sake of Christ's Church remain a public 'no'," such remarks of Luther's, and Lutheran manœuvres in the *Reichskammergericht* (the model of Fascist parliamentary action), led Cromwell to suppose that the preferment of such individuals as Cranmer and Barnes would lead to the transformation of the Church into an effective piece of state machinery. It was on this point that Cromwell exposed himself, and his opponents drove at him through his nominees in the Church. The attack was made by a group of a highly miscellaneous character, the most unprincipled power hunters co-operating with men of the highest principle, and the methods used were, from the legal point of view, repellent in the extreme; it was from every point of view dirty work, and yet the results were in the long run to the public good. The story has a moral for the contemporary liberal frustrated by delicacy and is well worth recalling at a time when the pressure of German ideas has again made odd political bedfellows. Mr. Christian Mawson drives his point home by telling his story as if it was a contemporary one, with motors, telephones, and evening newspapers among the properties. This technique has produced some of the dreariest writing of this century, but as Mr. Mawson is not engaged in seeing how near the knuckle he can come without Home Office intervention the effect is very different, and *Ramping Cat* is an exciting, readable, and amusing novel.

Red Rose is a somewhat difficult novel to describe or to review. It is founded on the life of Emma Goldman, a curious phenomenon who combined the power of evoking affection from all who had to do with her with the worst qualities of the Jewish and Slavonic peoples. Disorders sprang up in her footsteps, as the flowers sprang up in the footsteps of Persephone; what energy was not consumed in enormous Wagnerian rows with her lovers was frittered away in even more stupendous rows with people who had been too kind or had been not kind enough or were hostile to anarchy or were of unsound principle. And then there were the parties . . . . she was apt to judge the success of a meeting by the crowd she managed to carry on afterwards to a party, and by its duration into the small hours. The last years of her political activity were spent in a whole-hearted participation in the sectarian disputes which did so much to weaken the Spanish Republic and held down the better part of two divisions in the neighbourhood of Barcelona that could have been better employed at the front. In all her life she never took part in any constructive revolutionary movement, and almost all her activity was devoted to creating dissension within the ranks of the Left. Miss Mannin writes of her with the affection that she invariably inspired, but she is unable to transmit the secret of the attraction which radiated from her, and the story remains a melancholy chronicle of waste and disorder.

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The Man Who Loved Children is a strange combination of certainty and uncertainty; in it Christina Stead writes for the first time about America and some of the material has a somewhat undigested character. Her Baltimore is shadowy and a little unconvincing, but the story moves to the edge of the tidewater at Annapolis and there finds the astonishing vividness of the *Salzburg Tales* and *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*. The story is slight enough, of the descent of a family to poverty, and of the agonies of growing up for young girls, but the completeness of understanding and the transference of the experience to the reader gives the book a full and satisfying quality. It is as complete a description of the relation between two people, a father and a daughter, as it would be well possible to write, and the father is a really horrible figure, the Babbitt of a nightmare. There is an intensity of vision about the book which gives one the awed and expectant feeling that one gets from Samuel Palmer's moonlight scenes: this is our world—but only just.

The exquisite, mild writing of *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* has a lulling and deceptive effect that obscures the character of the story. It is so gentle and limpid that one accepts it at its surface value without thinking, it might be an aunt telling one an anecdote she recalled from her childhood. But the situation which arises between Sapphira, her husband, and her daughter over the slave girl gives one a clear sight of the intensity of feeling which split families in the American Civil War, of the degradation which owning people brings to the owners as well as to the slaves, and of the making of the American spirit. With our blank and cosy ignorance of American history we forget that the chaos of the wilderness was faced by men who were out of touch with organised society and that the America of to-day, for all its faults, represents a superb recovery from a cultural collapse which in its initial stages threatened disorder on a Chinese scale. The collapse was in the main due to the incapacity of our government with its new continental responsibility, the recovery is due to the good will of the common man reared in the English democratic tradition which came to birth with the rejection of Machiavelli and Luther. The slight story of family spirit on the matter of whether or no a slave girl shall be seduced is the story of a skirmish on the immense battlefield where a victory was won which was as important as the defeat of Nazi Germany will be, it is a reminder of the strength and validity of democratic ideals.

ANTHONY WEST

AN ENGLISH CONCENTRATION CAMP

Never Mind, Mr. Lom. By ALFRED LOMNITZ. *Macmillan.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Lom, presumably Herr Lomnitz himself, a middle-aged German artist who had been residing in England for nearly seven years up to the outbreak of war, was one of the many friendly enemy aliens who were so shamefully treated by our Government under the panic "Intern the lot" policy of a year ago. This book is an account of his three months' experience in an English concentration camp.

It may be said at once that it is not in the least a sensational book. Mr. Lom has an abiding affection and admiration for the British (his first and apparently unrevised opinion of whom was, "If anyone has both the right and the capacity to lead an Empire, they have"), and though they consigned him and his fellow-internees at first to conditions more suitable to cattle, his confidence and his charwoman's philosophy, which forms the title of the book, carried him through, and he emerged more fortified than downcast by his experience. There is no instance here of insult or brutality; the worst hardships were mental rather than physical, and all the jailors seem to have behaved with politeness and sometimes with kindness. Indeed, one of Mr. Lom's fellow-sufferers, commenting upon a press report of the camp, remarks: "Damn it, I knew we were pretty badly off, but I didn't know things were as bad as these newspaper fellows say they are."

After being herded together for some days on a racecourse, "sitting sundazed in the grandstand's ridiculous tip-up seats (if you don't think they can be ridiculous try sitting on one, in the sun, looking at a racecourse, without races, without horses, but lots of barbed wire and not a few sunbathers from Vienna) . . ." the interned were removed to the camp that was to become notorious, a municipal building estate at Huyton, near Liverpool. There they were overcrowded and underfed, and lived in constant dread of being sent overseas, which nearly 1,500 of them soon were. For ten days they had not been permitted to write and tell their friends and relatives what had happened to them, and though they were now allowed, theoretically at any rate, to send two letters per week ("not more than twenty-four lines of writing"), their incoming mail was tormentingly held up. Newspapers were at first prohibited, and any sort of furniture except palliasses and blankets. When Lom asked for a table and a few chairs, he "was refused gently. There was an old War Office order, he was told, that prisoners of war are forbidden to have movable furniture."

The Commandant in charge of this disgraceful military muddle was naturally unpopular, but we do not actually meet him in the book, and how far he was personally responsible does not appear. To a request for better food he is alleged to have replied, "My orders are to keep the men here. I've no instructions about feeding them"; but his official announcement after the departure of the 1,500 internees for transport overseas (the *Arandora Star* had recently gone down) that "Nobody was taken to the transport by force. Any allegation to the contrary was false. No soldier laid a finger on any man to compel him," whatever else may be thought of it, seems evidence of an uneasy British conscience somewhere. As Lom observes: "Poor fellows, if they had known there was a chance of escape by refusal, their number would have been short by one thousand instead of six men!"

But public disapproval was now vocal, a change of policy soon occurred and a new Commandant was appointed who reorganised the camp on humane principles. Lom, who had kept up his interest in painting hitherto as best he might, mostly on stray pieces of old newspaper (some examples of which are reproduced), was given a studio to work in. A happy community rapidly developed, so that when those sympathetic foreigners who should never have been arrested at all began to be released—those, that is to say, who had not been drowned on their way overseas—many of them at Huyton experienced "a stab of regret at leaving a hole which had become . . . home."

The above information, however, which is what most readers will be after, is not extracted from these pages without perseverance. The remorseful oppressor must naturally feel diffident about criticising his victim's descriptive powers, but in spite of the promise of his subject, Herr Lomnitz is not successful in holding our attention. The thin disguise he adopts of objectivising himself as Mr. Lom is extremely worrying to begin with, and the necessity for such a device is not evident, for the total effect of the book is more likely to be soothing than wounding to British vanity. Nevertheless, Herr Lomnitz may well have experienced feelings of diffidence himself, not unmixed

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CHATTO & WINDUS

with prudence, about presenting his story autobiographically to a country which, in spite of his loyalty to it, had used him so ill and might do so again; but one cannot help feeling that the opportunity for self-indulgence afforded by this indirect method was also an inducement. Certainly some of the book is so sentimental that it could scarcely have been written at all in the first person. Moreover, Mr. Lom (perhaps we, too, should make use of him) has a number of pet fanciful and philosophic bees in his bonnet which he delights to let fly, and "the dynamic," "the genetic" and "the higher reality of instinct" claim more of his attention than does, for instance, the presentation of his fellow-sufferers in the camp. This is a pity, for in documents of this sort, observation is more important than introspection. The result is that Keyser, Sack, Henry, Eilern and the rest of Mr. Lom's friends are no more to us than names, and the joys and sorrows of their meetings and partings leave us quite unmoved. However, the story suddenly rises when he is released from the camp and, perhaps, from the restraint of describing it, and the description of his journey back to Oxford, with its attendant adventures, is genuinely moving. The book might well have ended there, but, alas, nothing can be left to the imagination, and twenty-five additional pages invite us to share with Lom, step by step, his tender reunion with every object, animate and inanimate, of his home life. But at any rate we learn the happy news that he has been received back with sympathy and honour in his Oxfordshire village, after an experience which, though shorter and less beastly than that of the exiles overseas, must be shaming to all Englishmen who read of it here.

J. R. ACKERLEY

CINE-BIOLOGY

Cine-Biology. By J. V, DURDEN, MARY FIELD and F. PERCY SMITH. *Pelican.* 6*d.*

One of the influential books of our time has been Wells and Huxley's *The Science of Life.* It gave a new energy to popular science and extended the reading of many of us. As an addict I am peculiarly grateful to the biology section of Pelican Books. Every now and then they publish a first-rate little volume, well written, popular without being woolly, and illustrated with photographs; ten years ago such volumes, if they had been written at all, would have cost half-a-guinea. To fellow-addicts I recommend Professor Munro Fox's *The Personality of Animals,* a brilliantly lucid account of the sense perceptions of creatures ranging from bulls to minnows. Do you know how far animals are colour-blind? the range of hearing in fishes? Prof. Fox gives answers to all such questions. He knows the results of the latest research, yet writes in a way that can be understood by everyone. The same may be said of this new Pelican, *Cine-Biology.*

The title needs a little explaining. The three authors—a biologist, a nature photographer and a film director—were responsible for those admirable screen series, *Secrets of Nature* and *Secrets of Life,* and they have co-operated again to write a book about some of the smallest creatures that came under their lens. They write almost as well as they film, which is saying a lot, for obviously no words could depict some natural processes as exactly or excitingly as the film. In the case of the sea urchin, for example, cameras were able, by a technique of speeded-up photography, to resume the life of the sea urchin from the fertilisation of the egg to the blastula stage in a few minutes; here, the best writing, aided by stills, can't hope to compete. But visual training, and the contact with audiences, have helped these authors to a style of their own. They aim not only at precise statement, but at the description which will bring facts most vividly before the eye. Take the *Paramecium,* a single-cell creature which no previous biologist (so far as I am aware) has enabled us to *see.* Here it is:

> *Paramecium,* when swimming freely, is of a definite shape, the common name of "Slipper Animalcule" being very apt . . . a more or less distinct tapering towards the posterior end suggests the idea of a tail. It fails to be slipper-like because the body has a slight twist. The way it moves from place to place is totally different from the way in which *Amoeba* progresses [already described]; indeed, the possession of a sort of "strait-jacket" in the form of its pellicle does not allow *Paramecium* such liberty of movement as is necessary for the thrusting out of almost fluid pseudopodia. Whereas *Amoeba* might be said to flow along the surface of mud or other objects submerged in the pond, *Paramecium* swims freely and vigorously in the surrounding water. It rows itself along like some microscopic galley or trireme of the spacious days of Rome; its means of propulsion, its oars, are innumerable tiny hairs of protoplasm, called cilia, which bristle from all over the pellicle like the stubble on an unshaven chin. These cilia beat the water in perfect unison, and in conjunction with the twist of the body and its slender shape, cause the animal to travel at high speed, spinning like a rifle bullet as it goes.

Most of the invertebrates dealt with in *Cine-Biology* inhabit ponds or rock pools. Amoeba, Paramecium, Stentor or Trumpet Animalcule, fresh and sea-water polyps, the sea urchin, the liver fluke of the sheep, Annelid worms, Peripatus (link between arthropods and polychete worms), water fleas, the dragon-fly; these are some of the little creatures brought before us, and to say that they are as well described as the minor characters in a Tolstoy novel is hardly exaggeration. The facts in nearly every case are fantastically exciting. Those who have ambled through *The Science of Life* will know some of these life histories already: the adventures, for example, outdoing Munchausen, of the three generations of the sheep's liver fluke. *Cine-Biology* gives far more detail of description, and if anything is missing from the text it is provided by a double page of photographs and diagrams in the middle of the book. There are altogether, by the way, 119 of these micro-photographs, which I need hardly say are admirable.

A few passages provide glimpses of the cine-biologist's working methods. The fact that he has actually to photograph living animals instead of relying on specimens and previously tabulated data means that he can sometimes correct or add to scientific knowledge. Microscopy began in the seventeenth century with the fuzziest of visions which scientists then could do little more than "interpret." Imagination played a large part in those early discoveries, and the authors suggest that this explains how such human terms as arms, legs, horns and pigtails have crept into the description of insects. Their own practice is blameless. They make quite plain which words are scientific and which words are metaphorically applied to create a picture. G. W. STONIER

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which put American newspaper advertising at the head of the contemporary field. Temperamentally we are inclined to half-measures, distrust rhetorical emphasis and cling to cobwebby notions of "good" and "bad" taste. True, English advertising has improved considerably during recent years. The standard of typography and the standard of illustration have both been raised: some slight advance has been registered even in the technique of "copywriting": but our advertising agents and the firms who employ them have still far to go. It was not to be expected, then, that the outbreak of a second World War would find us any better prepared in the realms of publicity than in the sphere of national defence. As usual, we improvised as we went along: and, as usual, the results have been a trifle scrappy. Good ideas and bad ideas—old fashioned and new fangled—conceptions that belong to the present day, and work that might date back to 1914 and would not have seemed unduly advanced at the time of the Boer War—all appear in this voluminous collection of British war advertisements.

Modern Publicity in War covers advertising of several different types. Here, on the one hand, is publicity designed to "sell" the war and promote ideas of national service and patriotic self-sacrifice: while, on the other hand, we observe the attempts of the contemporary retailer or manufacturer to keep his name before the public and nurse their goodwill, though he can no longer promise they will be able to obtain his product. Of a collection so heterogeneous it is difficult to make any general criticism. One notices, however, here as elsewhere, the British tendency to soft-pedal every advertising message and to do best when the method of approach adopted is apparently least forceful. Winged lions pawing at the sky, gigantic muscular figures determinedly "doing their bit"; bold injunctions that we should "Go to It," the Prime Minister stabbing at us with pointed forefinger, fall strangely flat in the gentlemanly hands of the British commercial draughtsman. Apart from Mr. Churchill's brand, we wince at rhetoric. Much more characteristic and, in the end, no doubt, infinitely more persuasive are the well-mannered, sometimes humorous, now and then almost deprecatory advertisements issued by government departments and various public bodies, urging us to avoid waste, make the most of our food, invest in War Bonds. We can be coaxed, gently shoved: we won't be bothered or shouted at. As Mr. Gloag remarks in his introductory essay: "*No single piece of propaganda issued to the British Public by the Government has contained a threat.*" There have been suggestions, not bleak instructions, often conveyed with real human understanding. What other country on earth, when telling its citizens that food waste must be checked, would have dealt so lightheartedly with the name of the Minister of Food?

> Those who have the will to win
> Cook potatoes in the skin,
> For they know the sight of peelings
> Deeply hurts Lord Woolton's feelings.

What other country indeed! Events have yet to show whether the quality that Mr. Gloag (a great admirer of Mr. A. P. Herbert and all he stands for, and a despiser and condemner of "bilious weeklies") is pleased to call our "civilised good humour" can win through in so humourless and savage a universe. Meanwhile, Fougasse offers some facetious advice on the dangers of unguarded conversation: Mr. Nicholas Bentley cracks mild jokes on the theme of food saving: "Billy Brown," that detestable suburban imp, acts as Pickwickian compère for London Transport: and Mr. Therm, waving a friendly starfish flipper, agrees reassuringly not to tell us about his bombs. . . . Magnificent but hardly advertising! might exclaim an American critic. Yet it is possible that a discreetly muffled voice, prefaced by the suspicion of an apologetic cough, sinks deeper into our curious English minds than the clearest trumpet tone.

Among English commercial artists, Mr. Francis Marshall can claim the very unusual distinction of having produced work that has been used and admired in New York papers. Certainly, he is the most successful, the most versatile and, in many respects, the most accomplished of English fashion-artists, and his book is an admirable guide to the art of fashion-drawing. Patiently, sometimes wittily, he explains how one may cultivate the lucrative technique of seeing women as, at any given period, they wish to be seen and, in the clothes they wear, catching the outline of a half-imaginary elegance. His comments on the pre-war "Rag Trade" are brisk and informative. If Fashion should ever reappear on its former opulent scale, Mr. Marshall's volume will serve as a standard text book for young men and women who wish to try their luck in a particularly exhausting racket, where hours are long, associates repulsive, but rewards solid. If Fashion has gone for good, and the horde of American buyers never returns again to the Ritz and Crillon, it will provide the social historian with abundant material for an instructive discourse.

COPYWRITER

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It is difficult to disagree with the sound sense of this book, and yet, after reading it, I am left wondering whether in destroying many logical fallacies, Miss Stebbing does not fall into an equally discouraging fallacy, one which is psychological rather than verbal.

Be definite, think plainly, express yourself clearly are Miss Stebbing's watchwords, and her book consists largely in pulling to pieces examples of bad and muddled thinking. She shows how Professor E. H. Carr in his book *The Twenty Years Crisis* uses the words "Utopian" and "idealist" to describe every political attitude which is unsuccessful, unfashionable, or which he does not agree with; how a defender of Catholicism, Miss Rosalind Murray, can involve herself in saying that poverty and slums are not bad except in so far as they are the sins of the rich; how muddled the President of Balliol can be on occasion; how shallow is Mr. Clive Bell's definition of a "sensitive and civilised man"; how false are Mr. Gerald Heard's analogies, and how mixed his metaphors.

It is bracing to attend such a vigorously conducted coconut shy even if some of the targets strike one not so much as coconuts but as very hoary chestnuts of muddled thinking (in examples of which our age is particularly rich). If one is an author, one experiences in the presence of Miss Stebbing's breezy commonsensical gaze, the unusual wish to slink into a corner without one's books being read.

Some of the statements which Miss Stebbing attacks are not just muddled, they are wholly pernicious. For instance, here is Professor Carr approving of the political realist in a paraphrase of Machiavelli: "Politics are not (as Utopians pretend) a function of ethics, but ethics of politics. Men are 'kept honest by constraint.' Machiavelli recognised the importance of morality, but thought there could be no effective morality where there was no effective authority. Morality is the product of power."

Miss Stebbing's forceful way of dealing with such opportunism is tonic and should be read at a time when many disillusioned idealists are writing in this way. However, it is one thing to oppose barbarous fashions of thought on the

a 'stitch-in-time' saves—

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grounds that they are barbarous, and another to oppose them on the same level as one opposes muddled thinking, simply for being illogical and muddled. It may be a fallacy to think that the clearing up of superficial muddles will alter the processes that have produced muddled thought.

To take a rather extreme example (dealt with at length by Miss Stebbing in her earlier *Thinking to Some Purpose*), the speeches of Ramsay MacDonald when he was Prime Minister in the first National Government are happy hunting grounds for logicians like Miss Stebbing. But that they were muddled is really the most superficial fact about MacDonald's speeches. Amusing as this oratory was at the time, we can now see that the knots and convolutions really ran parallel to the muddled policy in economics, foreign affairs and unemployment of that time. In that case, isn't it irrelevant to attack the MacDonald-bogy instead of the far more sinister reality behind this curious figure in tweeds? If MacDonald had been cleverer and more dishonest, he might have produced speeches less vulnerable to Miss Stebbing's method of attack. The fact that he was muddled, in a way does him credit: it shows that his intellect was too honest to cover up the devices of very adroit acts into which he pushed and was pushed. Being Ramsay MacDonald, such as he was, in 1931, and behaving as he did, and not being muddled, would not have been humanly possible, though a more skilful mouthpiece might have taken the place of MacDonald, and called itself, say, Chamberlain. So the advice Be Definite applied to the problem of MacDonaldism suggests itself a kind of fallacy. That arrangements of words in the mouth of a person living within a certain situation can either be arranged to have a logic independent of that situation, or else, by being altered, can alter the situation into a more sensible and logical one. But in practice this simply isn't true. By thinking more clearly in 1931, MacDonald wouldn't have altered the situation in which he was placed; he would simply have had to resign or cease to exist. Indeed, perhaps that is the tragedy of Ramsay MacDonald.

Again, it is possible that a person with a clear idea may express it in a muddled way. I do not feel that it takes us very far to be told that Mr. Gerald Heard expresses himself in a muddled way, for example. It is certainly true that he is often confused, perhaps at times optimistic, even disingenuous, in his utterances. But at the same time he is a preacher of great single-mindedness and an almost fanatical vision. Possibly Mr. Heard expresses himself badly. Possibly he is wrong in many of his opinions. But I cannot believe that thinking more logically and expressing himself more definitely would modify his vision. Nor do I think that an ability to detect the confusions in his arguments even helps the reader very much to have a critical attitude towards them, though, of course, it may be useful. The point is to understand whether he is right or wrong; and if he is either, the rightness or the wrongness far transcend his means of expressing himself.

Miss Stebbing's own peculiar fallacy seems to be a conviction that if everyone was definite and expressed himself logically, we would all have a clear, agreed view of the aims of our civilisation. We would see that slums are evil as slums, and not as the sins of the rich, that rationalism need not lead to scepticism, that mysticism, on the contrary, might lead to escapism, and so on. We would therefore set ourselves to the sensible task of putting our house in order, retaining a sense of ideals and conscience, without either being idealists or believing in God or the devil. This view seems to rest on two illusions: (1) That Roman Catholics, Fascists, Anthroposophists, etc., would all share Miss Stebbing's view of life if their logical errors were corrected. (2) That some of the most powerful and influential leaders in religion and politics of our time are even capable of becoming logical or having logical audiences. Often people who have opinions that seem to us wrong hold them more fervently than people who seem to us right; and no amount of sweet reasonableness will cure them of a wrong-headedness which is fundamental.

This brings us to the root of the problem. Sensible, reasonable, desirable, humane, sympathetic as Miss Stebbing's view of society is, it is not inspiring. Personally, I would prefer a world run by her, even if she censored all the fallacies in my books, to the present chaos. Yet, when, in the last chapter, she quite reasonably shows that people can be moral without believing in God or immortality, I am bound to ask, "Yes, but will they?" Unfortunately we live in a time in which hundreds of people must be immediately prepared to sacrifice their lives in a good cause, unless a bad one is to dominate them. Yet in order to achieve this, passions, superstitions, feelings have to be invoked. It is no use pretending that the millions of people who eagerly read astrological brochures will respond to Miss Stebbing's appeals for sound sense and good judgment. Instead of bewailing this, there would perhaps be some sound sense in trying to understand it. Very few people in the world's history have died for the sake of "being definite," thinking clearly, and behaving morally without the background of a belief in any metaphysical system.

STEPHEN SPENDER

Ringside. By TREVOR WIGNALL. *Hutchinson.* 10s. 6d.

One of the minor delights of pre-war journalism was the sporting and entertainment features in the *Daily Express*. Barrington, Holt, Wignall and the rest, with the inspiring example of William Hickey, taught Fleet Street an idiom that washed out the faded theatrical costumery of the acknowledged heavyweights. Their method was a discreet alliance of slang with those elements of journalese which they could use with a slight private irony. Their columns had colour, vivacity and that informal air which rubs in easily with common speech. Twopence on Sunday bought prose a lot less durable than theirs.

Mr. Wignall's *Ringside* is as readable as almost any of his daily columns. In it he runs over the boxers of recent years, touches up the familiar stories of big fights, adds a critical commentary, and garnishes his tale of champions with an appropriate thumb-nail sketch of each. Possibly no other material is so hackneyed as these contests which have already been described in the memoirs of the boxers, referees, managers, time-keepers and towel-flippers concerned, but they wear remarkably well. Mr. Wignall touches up the actual fighting with humorously extravagant phrasing, and discusses the qualities of each performance in a very knowledgeable way; but it is the glamour, the human comedy and the shadiness of the Ring which stir him most. The procession of champions, surrounded by crooks, gamblers and the legion of the quicker-witted stumbles into the feverish limelight; each awkward hero struggles to cope with the crazy distortion of all his values; and on the other side of defeat lie obscurity and the chance of increasing disablement. That is the usual pattern, and it obviously takes a cool head to survive. Theirs is a fabulous world in which fame, wealth and disaster are all as it were larger than life-size. Drama in these dimensions is a cinch for any journalist who can put one word after another, and Mr. Wignall gets the full exotic flavour of Carnera, Battling Siki, Joe Louis, Maxie Baer: the Jews, the wops, the white hopes and the negroes: the nice guys who fought clean, the wise guys who tucked it away in a bank, the flash boys with loud mouths, the old-timers spoiled of health and money and livelihood. Some of the writing is careless; there are annoying repetitions, and the personality of the author is not always congenial; nevertheless *Ringside* is fascinating to read. Mr. Wignall has watched the greatest circus of modern times. His account of it might well inspire another Lautrec.

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No. 607

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RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, September 29th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 604

Set by Raymond Mortimer

A first prize of two guineas and a second prize of half a guinea are offered for the best English versions of the following poem. The sonnet form need not be retained, and entries will be judged upon their merit as English poems rather than upon their literal closeness to the original.

LE NAUFRAGÉ

Avec la brise en poupe et par un ciel serein,
Voyant le Phare fuir à travers la mâture,
Il est parti d'Egypte au lever de l'Arcture,
Fier de sa nef rapide aux flancs doublés d'airain.

Il ne reverra plus le môle Alexandrin.
Dans le sable où pas même un chevreau ne pâture
La tempête a creusé sa triste sépulture ;
Le vent du large y tord quelque arbuste marin.

Au pli le plus profond de la mouvante dune,
En la nuit sans aurore et sans astre et sans lune,
Que le navigateur trouve enfin le repos.

O Terre, ô Mer, pitié pour son Ombre anxieuse !
Et sur la rive hellène où sont venus ses os,
Soyez-lui, toi, légère, et toi, silencieuse.

Report by Raymond Mortimer

I did not give the authorship of this sonnet, because it is so uncharacteristic, and I thought it would amuse competitors to guess. Several recognised that it was by José-Maria Heredia. He has here departed from his usual and deliberate Parnassian coldness to reflect the warmth and pity he found in the Greek Anthology. For this reason it is my favourite among *Les Trophées*. Moreover it seemed to me a fit epitaph not only upon the British and Greeks who have lately died off the Greek and Cretan coasts but upon all the Allied sailors who have given their lives in the Atlantic and the waters round our shores. Readers of this journal have evidently been similarly moved by it, for there were over a hundred and sixty entries, several of which gave a contemporary setting. Those who, with equal enterprise, sought to keep very close to the original came against two difficulties. The fifth line has a marmoreal, typically Parnassian hardness to which English verse does not readily lend itself, and "pas même un chevreau" must be paraphrased—there is a clumsiness in "the very kids" or "not even a kid." Guy Innes had the happy thought of writing a sonnet in alexandrines, Woodnut produced a mixture of Browning and Pound, Fuscus was Housmanly with elegance and I wish I had space to print his verses. Robert Murray turned Alexandria to Leith and Hellas to Holland; Ronald Mason artfully wrote his verses in the first person, Maurice Edelman modernised the "flancs doublés d'airain" into "the double-bulge of the unsinkable cruiser." I have found it an exacting task to select the most deserving entries, for the standard is high. One competitor writes "I have had a lovely time writing it," and as I can mention only a small proportion of the entrants, I hope that they widely share this feeling. Apart from those I have already mentioned notably good attempts were made by A.H.A., Pibwob, Humphrey Higgens, F. W. Bateson, "Incog," L. V. Upward, H. W. L. Hartley, (S.H.)², Freda C. Bond, Susanne Knowles, Betty E. G. Cox, U. B. Monk, Tahnit, F. Rothbaum, E. C. Phare, J. G. Harrison, H. S., Edith Hamey, Hilda Greenwood, Arnold Harris, E. Stanway, Charles Abbatt, A. Morgan Young, Private 10564175, Quaime, G. A. Shires, Eliot Hodgkin and J. Griffyth Fairfax. I am still left with nine entries all of which in my opinion deserve print and a prize. Very reluctantly I reject Sir Robert Witt's skilful and very accurate translation and H. C. Gleaves' verses, remarkable for diction. I recommend that in view of the uncommon excellence of the entries and the popularity of the competition the usual prize-money be increased by one guinea, and divided between F.C.C., Allan M. Laing, John Mavrogordato, G. de Vavasour, Alex Comfort, Joyce Reeves and Valentine. I feel confident that even competitors who may justly feel that their entries were equally meritorious will agree that the poems printed are in their various styles remarkably accomplished.

THE LOST SAILOR

A following breeze, Arcturus clear of clouds,
He watched the Pharos fading through the shrouds,
The coast of Egypt vanish from his view,
Proud of his buoyant ship, with bronze made new.

O nevermore the lights of home for her!
On desert dunes where not a blade can grow
And through the tamarisk the sad winds blow,
The storm itself has dug his sepulchre.

Deep in the hollow of the shifting sands
Make still at last his troubled heart and hands,
And in the starless, moonless, dawnless night
Grant to a shipwrecked mariner his right.

There, on that Grecian shore, become his grave,
Give to his wandering ghost what all ghosts crave;
Cover him lightly, earth, and hush him, wave.

F. C. C.

THE SHIPWRECKED SAILOR

Fair wind he knew, starred sky with not a cloud,
And Pharos saw through straining cordage slip
As from the shores of Egypt sailed his ship,
Brass-bound and strong, whose swiftness made him proud.

He will not ever see the Mole again:
In sterile sand, where no wild grasses stir,
Rude storms have dug his lonely sepulchre;
There through some salt sea shrub the winds complain.

In deepest wrinkle of the shifting dune,
In endless night, unlit by stars or moon,
The sailor's last long peace may now be blessed.

Pity, O Earth and Sea, his careworn Shade,
And on the Grecian shore, where his bones rest,
Be still, O Sea; and Earth, be lightly laid.

ALLAN M. LAING.

MARINER'S END

Under a blue sky, with a stern wind breathing,
He watched the lighthouse through his cordage slide,
Left Egypt, Arcturus rising, in pride
Of his swift ship and of her copper sheathing,
Never again to see that harbourside.
The storm has hollowed, in unpastured land,
Visited only by the sea wind wreathing
The samphire, his melancholy grave.
There in the deepest fold of moving sand,
Where the night has no stars, no moon, no lightening,
At last the Navigator's landfall made,
Shall Earth and Sea pity his questing shade,
On a Greek margin, where his bones are whitening
In weightless dust beside a noiseless wave?

JOHN MAVROGORDATO.

THE DROWNED SAILOR

He left Egypt under a calm sky.
Arcturus rose. The winking Pharos passed.
Framed small between the cording and the mast
Of the swift ship he loved.

He has sailed by
For the last time. He shall not see again
The pier of Alexandria. Near the wave
The wind has dug his melancholy grave,
And twists the sparse shrubs of that arid plain.

In a deep hollow of the moving dune,
In night that knows no dawn, no star, no moon,
Here may this pilot find a sleep profound.

O vex not, earth and sea, his troubled shade,
And on the Greek shores where his bones are laid
Rest lightly, earth; and waters, make no sound.

G. DE VAVASOUR.

He sailed from Egypt with the dog star rising
Sailed with a following wind and a clear sky
Twin skins of metal on his quick ship's ribs,
Watching the notable lighthouse cross his rigging.

He will not load again in Alexandria.
Where the salt bushes' twigs trace circles
And the blown thorn, not even the wild goat's hoof
Grazing cracks the twig and the bone's lattice.

Under this dune's deep hems, where the stars go out
And the moving grains obscure all reckoning
This pilot sleeps and seeks no azimuth.

Sand, drift him lightly, wash him quietly, water
Having regard to his much travelled spirit
And his ribs scattered on this classical shore.

ALEX COMFORT.

AFTER DUNKIRK

The wind filling his sail, the motor throbbing,
He steered from England as the North Star rose.
The Castle fled through the rigging as he watched,
Proud of his swift craft with new-tarred sides.

He will not see the Dover cliffs again.
The storm has dug his grave in bitter sand
Where no goat crops, only the sweeping saltwind
Has garlanded his desolate tomb with wrack.

Folded within the sandhills' moving hollows
In dawnless night unlit by moon or star
The pilot sleeps.

Earth and sea, pity his troubled ghost.
And where his bones rest on the Gallic shore
Lie light upon him, earth, and silent, sea.

JOYCE REEVES.

CRASHED

On the windless morning of a pale, clear day,
Making one circuit—round and then away—
Seeing beneath his lowered wing,
The matchbox hangars and the tiny men,
He left the 'drome, proud in his taut machine.

He will not see the landing ground again.
Among the rocks, there where no creature feeds,
His bones are flung; there where the wild weather
And the gales shake the straggling, scattered heather.

Deep in the lonely glen, among the snows,
In darkness without star, or dawn or moon,
The airman at the last has found repose.

Oh Earth, Oh Wind, pity his unquiet shade,
And, where his body lies, out on the Scottish hill,
Be thou not heavy, and thou, still.

VALENTINE.

HOVIS
Hominis Vis
THE STRENGTH OF MAN
Leads to Victory
Try it and Prove it
Macclesfield BEST BAKERS BAKE IT

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES AND POST-WAR CONTROL—OIL SHARES—THE WAR AND SECURITY VALUES

THE Stock markets are less bullish and should remain so while the Russian issue hangs in the balance. Equity Shares, in particular, move more consciously of their difficulties. The position of shareholders of international trading companies, especially those with large interests on the Continent of Europe, is tantalising. No one can yet obtain a vision of the post-war world—at any rate, the European world. What did President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill mean when they talked of common access to raw materials after the war? Will the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, for example, remain with the monopoly of the Iranian oilfields, or does the Atlantic declaration of peace aims imply that this company, whose controlling shareholder is the British Government, will have to invite American, Russian and German interests into its preserves? I do not know the answer to this question. It may be significant that after the last war the Iraq Petroleum Company was so reconstituted that American, Royal Dutch-Shell, Anglo-Iranian and French interests carved up the share capital except for the 5 per cent. tenaciously held by Mr. Gulbenkian. What difference this made to the outside world I do not know, except that the Mediterranean pipe-line from the Iraqui oilfields was bifurcated, one branch going through French Syria and one through British Palestine. Personally, I do not see that it matters very much who actually operates the source of the raw material provided that the output is either sold in a free world market or distributed to the markets by international agreement. The important question is that the world's raw materials should not be exploited for selfish vested interests or appropriated for the commercial profit of international capitalistic groups.

* * *

The shareholders of Shell Transport and Trading, however, do not appear to have realised the uncertainties of their post-war trading position, for the shares have risen from 35*s.* to over 55*s.*, although the dividend is only 5 per cent. tax free and the yield 3 per cent. gross. This company has a double problem, for not only does it have to face the risk of losing its direct control of some of its raw materials, but it remains in ignorance of the damage which it is suffering to its costly distributing plant in Europe. Moreover, the fate of its senior partner, the Royal Dutch Petroleum, is another uncertainty. The shareholders of Lever Brothers are perhaps in a less obscure position, but, nevertheless, the accounts of the English Lever Brothers and Unilever are complicated by the equalisation agreement which exists between the English and Dutch companies in regard to the equity dividends. The preliminary statement of the 1940 profits of the English company disclosed this week an improvement—£6.9 millions against £6.7 millions in 1939—but as the directors considered it prudent to place certain sums to reserve to meet possible liabilities under the dividend equalisation agreement—they are not sure whether the Dutch shareholders are actually receiving their dividends under the German occupation—they have reduced the dividend on the ordinary shares from 10 per cent. to 5 per cent. The result was that Unilever shares were marked down nearly 1*s.* to 26*s.* 3*d.*

* * *

The Investor's Chronicle has published a chart illustrating the effect of this war on security values as compared with the last war. It shows a remarkably close parallel between security price movements in 1914-15 and in 1939-40. A year ago the *Investor's Chronicle* advised the investor to watch the movements in industrial and commodity-cum-gold shares on the grounds that the Government might be forced to restore part of the profit incentive to industry and that inflation had still to be reckoned with. But things have not turned out quite as the *Investor's Chronicle* expected. Industrial shares have risen, but commodity and gold shares have lagged behind—the first, in spite of the fact that "the Government's idea of restoring the profit incentive to industry is woefully inadequate." Does the *Investor's Chronicle* really expect profiteering to be restored to private enterprise? Does it wish to abolish the Excess Profits Tax altogether? Ordinary shares have, in fact, risen because a few optimists see the end of the war in 1942 and because good news brings buyers into the market while bad news does not bring in sellers. The *Investor's Chronicle* now expects commodity and gold shares to catch up with industrial shares. It regards the fears about the "unreality" of the gold position to be groundless, and it believes that commodity shares were unduly depressed by the threat of a Japanese war in the Far East and by the harshness of the Excess Profits Tax on companies working wasting assets. Personally, I would not follow this advice to buy commodity and gold shares. Apart from the political risks in the East, the concessions allowed by the Chancellor to wasting assets in respect of the Excess Profits Tax are not sufficient to allow any increase in the dividends of mining or commodity companies. Further, there is the post-war prospect of a collapse in commodity prices or some form of international control of other raw materials.

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Company Meeting

FURNESS, WITHY & CO.

50 YEARS' PROGRESS

THE 50th ordinary general meeting of Furness, Withy and Company, Limited, was held on September 16th in London.

The Lord Essendon, J.P., the chairman, had previously circulated his statement, from which the following is an extract:—

The net profit, after making provision for taxation, amounts to £665,072, an increase of £46,421 over the previous year's profit figure of £618,651. Compared with the previous year our steamship profits are down by reason of the vessels having been under requisition during almost the entire period. Our dividends show a smaller return owing to increased taxation, the increase in our profits being due to revenue from other sections of our business. After providing £350,000 for depreciation and a transfer of £100,000 to the fleet replacement account, the directors recommend a dividend on the ordinary stock of 6 per cent., less income tax, as compared with 5 per cent., less tax, in the previous year, leaving a balance to be carried forward of £186,213.

This is the 50th annual general meeting of the company. Incorporated with a share capital of £700,000, this figure has now been increased to £7,500,000. This is indicative of the wonderful expansion in the business of the company.

Liner companies are necessarily apprehensive about the recovery, when the war is over, of the trades which they have had temporarily to relinquish—but under war conditions this and all other anxieties and grievances are of secondary consideration. The duty of all shipowners is to work their vessels for Government account to the best possible advantage.

As an industry we rely on the very definite assurances given by the Government in the White Paper dealing with the wartime financial arrangements between themselves and British shipowners.

In closing, I should like to express deep admiration for the courage and tenacity with which our merchant seamen pursue their calling.

The report was unanimously adopted.

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